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The strange adventures of Frederick, bar



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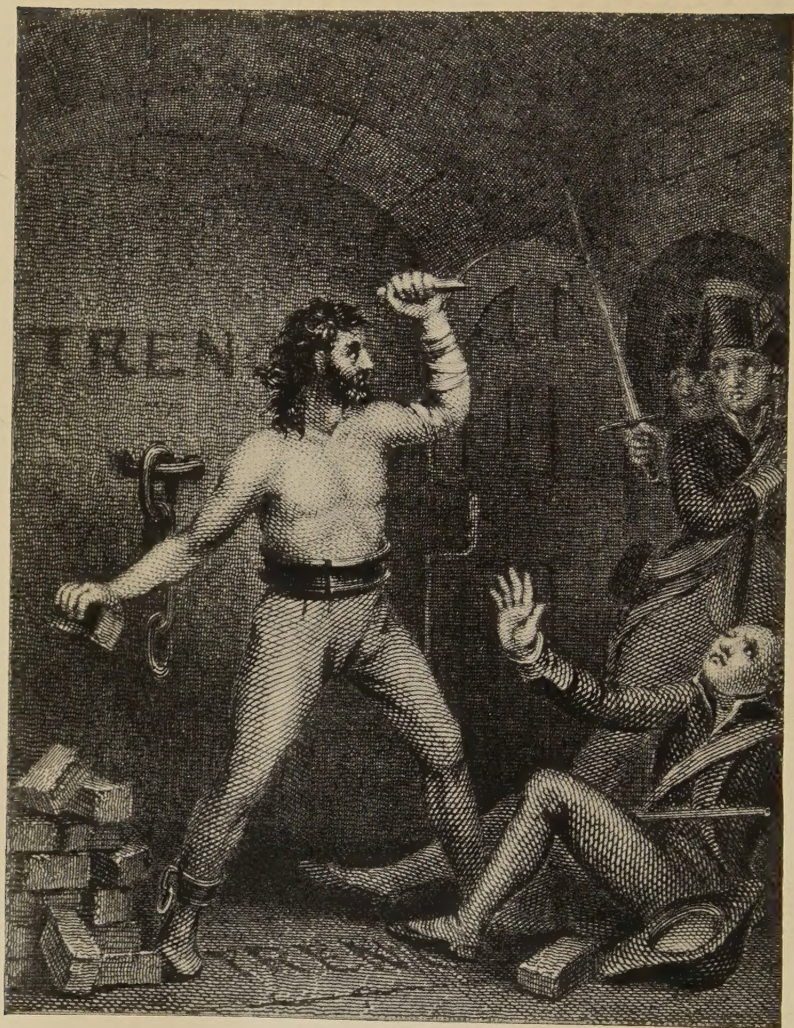


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THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF
FREDERICK BARON TRENCK



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THE DISCOVERY

[Frontispiece

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF FREDERICK BARON TRENCK

Edited by
PHILIP MURRAY



NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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1920

Made and Printed in Great Britain

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FOREWORD

As the following pages contain an autobiographical account of Frederick Friherr von der Trenck from his birth in 1726 to 1787, little more is required in this foreword than a brief relation of his doings from the latter year till his death in 1794.

In 1788 he visited Paris in connection with his wine business, and here he became something of a Society lion ; for the fame of his exploits had spread throughout Europe, and all were anxious to meet the man who had undergone such amazing adventures. The next year he visited Hungary, and in 1791 returned to Paris to be a spectator of the Revolution. After living there in safety throughout the Terror, he was at last denounced as an Austrian spy and guillotined on July 25th, 1794. He jested on the way to the scaffold, and died with the same hardihood with which he had lived.

The first volume of the famous autobiography, of which the following pages contain those parts of most interest to English readers, appeared in 1787. Shortly afterwards he translated the work into French and published it at Strasburg. A volume containing the poems which he wrote in his prison at Magdeburg had been issued in 1767. Later, his *magnum opus* and *opuscula* were collected into eight volumes and printed at Leipzig.

The first English translation of Trenck's life was

made by that interesting character, Thomas Holcroft (1745-1809)—shoemaker, pedlar, Newmarket stable-boy, schoolmaster, actor, dramatist, printer, novelist, and revolutionary—which was published in 1788 and went into several editions. The present version is based on Holcroft's translation and has been entirely rewritten. The old-fashioned spelling of most of the place and proper names, however, such as 'Sclavonia,' 'Dantzic,' etc., has been retained as being in keeping with the times of which Trenck wrote.

I have added one or two footnotes. Some of my readers will find in the note on page 11 a reason for much of Frederick the Great's enmity towards our unhappy hero. This *liaison* with the King's sister, however, does not seem to have occurred to Trenck as a reason for his monarch's animosity. But that is in keeping with Trenck's character. Carlyle has denied the intrigue *in toto*.

It is no part of my task in presenting this autobiography to moralise on this great adventurer: my readers will do that for themselves. Trenck is of a type that is not unknown in Germany, and some will already have met with his counterpart. He was no swashbuckler: he never drew his sword without blooding it, and while possessed of the courage, physique and erudition of The Admirable Crichton, he lacked just those qualities of moderation, tact and discretion which would have enabled him to leave a more distinguished mark on the page of history. Carlyle would have none of him, and denounces him as a liar and a ruffian. Probably the truth lies somewhere between Trenck's own account of himself and the declamatory phrasing of a not unbiased historian.

P. M.

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THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF FREDERICK BARON TRENCK

CHAPTER I

I WAS born at Königsberg in Prussia on the 16th of February, 1726, of one of the most ancient families in the country. My father, who was a knight of the military order and major-general of cavalry, died in 1740, after having received eighteen wounds in the Prussian service. My mother, descended from the house of Derschau, was a daughter of the president of the High Court at Königsberg. After my father's death in 1740 she married Count Lostange, a lieutenant-colonel in the Kiow Regiment of cuirassiers, with whom, leaving Prussia, she went and resided at Breslau. I had two brothers and a sister; my youngest brother was taken by my mother into Silesia; the other was a cornet in this last-named regiment; and my sister was married to the only son of the aged General Waldow, who quitted the service and with whom she lived in Brandenburg on his estates.

By temperament I was choleric and addicted to pleasure and dissipation; my tutors found

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this last defect most difficult to overcome ; happily they were aided by a love of knowledge inherent in me, an emulative spirit and a thirst for fame, which disposition it was my father's care to cherish.

My religion was Lutheran ; but morality and not superstitious bigotry or childish fears was taught me by my father. A soldier himself, he would have all his sons the same : thus when we quarrelled we were not permitted to terminate our disputes in the common way, but were provided with wooden sabres sheathed with leather, and, brandishing these, contested by blows for victory, while our father sat laughing, pleased at our valour and address. This practice and the praises he bestowed had the bad effect of encouraging a disposition which, with passions like mine, ought to have been counteracted carefully. Covetous of praise and accustomed to obtain the prize and be the hero of scholastic contentions, I acquired also the bad habit of arguing and of imagining myself a sage when little more than a boy. I became stubborn in argument, hasty to correct others instead of patiently attentive ; and by presumption continually liable to incite enmity.

How might a man, however great his talents, imbued with the heroic principles of liberty, hope for advancement and happiness under the despotic and iron government of Frederick !

I was taught neither to know nor to avoid, but to despise the whip of slavery. Had I learnt hypocrisy, craft and meanness, I had long since become a field-marshal, had been in quiet possession of my vast Hungarian estates, and had not passed the best years of my life in the dungeons of Magdeburg. I was addicted to no vice: I laboured in the cause of science, honour and virtue; kept no vicious company; was never, during the whole course of my life, intoxicated; was no gamester, no consumer of time in idleness or brutal pleasures; but devoted many hundred laborious nights to studies that might make me useful to my country. Yet was I punished with a severity too cruel even for the most worthless or most villainous.

I shall say little more of the first years of my life except that my father, who had a tender affection for me, took especial care of my education and sent me, at the age of thirteen, to the University of Königsberg where, under the tuition of Kowalewsky, my progress was rapid.

The year following, that is to say in 1740, I had a quarrel with one young Wallenrodt, a fellow student much taller and stronger than myself who, despising my weakness, thought proper to give me a blow. I demanded satisfaction—he came not to the appointed place,

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but treated my demand with contempt ; and I, forgetting all further respect, procured a second and attacked him in open day. We fought, and I had the fortune to wound him twice, the first time in the arm, the second in the hand.

This affair incited enquiry. Dr. Kowalewsky our tutor laid a complaint before the University, and I was condemned to three hours' confinement ; but my grandfather and guardian, President Derschau, with whom I was a great favourite, was so pleased with my courage that he instantly took me from this house and placed me under Professor Christiani.

Here I first began to enjoy full and entire liberty, and from this worthy man I learnt all I know of experimental philosophy and science. He loved me as his own son, and sometimes continued instructing me till midnight. Under his auspices in 1742 I maintained with great success two public theses, although I was then but sixteen.

Three days after my last public exordium a contemptible fellow and a professional bully sought a quarrel with me and obliged me to draw in my own defence. I wounded him in the groin. This continued success highly inflated my valour, and from that time I began to wear a sword of enormous length and to assume the accoutrements and appearance of a Hector.

Scarcely had a fortnight elapsed after this last affair before I had another with a lieutenant of the garrison, one of my friends, whom I had insulted. He received two wounds in the contest.

I ought to remark that at this time the University of Königsberg was still highly privileged. To send a challenge was held honourable ; and this was not only permitted, but would have been difficult to prevent, considering the great number of proud, hot-headed and turbulent nobility from Livonia, Courland, Sweden, Denmark and Poland, who came thither to study and of whom there were more than five hundred. This brought the University into disrepute, and endeavours have been made to remedy the abuse. A university ought to be a place of instruction and not a field of battle ; blood cannot be honourably shed except in defence of life or country.

In November 1742 the King sent for his adjutant-general, Baron Lottum, who was related to my mother, to Königsberg, and I dined with him at my grandfather's. He conversed much with me, and after putting various questions, purposely to discover what my talents and inclinations were, he demanded as if in joke whether I had any inclination to go with him to Berlin and serve my country as my ancestors had ever done, adding that in

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the army I should find much better opportunities of sending challenges than at a university. Inflamed with the desire of distinguishing myself, I listened with rapture to the proposition, and in a few days we departed for Potsdam.

On the morrow after my arrival I was presented to the King, as indeed I had been before in the year 1740, with the character of being then one of the most hopeful youths in the University. My reception was most flattering; my replies to the questions he asked, my height, figure and confidence, pleased him, and I soon obtained permission to enter his bodyguard as a cadet, with a promise of quick promotion.

The bodyguard formed at this time a model and school for the Prussian cavalry. It consisted of one single squadron of men, selected from the whole army, and their uniform was the most splendid in all Europe. Two thousand rix-dollars were needed to equip an officer; the cuirass was entirely plated with silver; and the horse, saddlery, and accoutrements alone cost four hundred rix-dollars. This squadron contained only six officers and a hundred and forty-four men; but there were always fifty or sixty supernumeraries in the Guard and as many horses, for the King incorporated in it all the most handsome men

he came across. The officers were the best taught of any in the army ; the King himself was their tutor. Their rise was rapid if they behaved well ; but they were broken for the least fault and punished by being sent to garrison regiments. It was likewise necessary that they should be tolerably rich, as well as possess such talents as might be employed successfully both in the army and at Court.

There are no soldiers in the world who undergo so much training as this bodyguard, and during the time I was in the service of Frederick I often had not eight hours' sleep in eight days. Parade was at four in the morning, when trials were made of all the alterations the King meant to introduce into his cavalry. Ditches of three, four, five, six feet and even wider were leaped, till someone broke his neck ; hedges were flown and the horses ran courses, meeting each other at full speed in a kind of lists of more than half a league in length. In these exercises we often had several men or horses killed or wounded. It frequently happened that the same experiments were repeated after dinner with fresh horses ; and it was not uncommon at Potsdam to hear the alarm sounded twice in a night. The horses stood in the King's stables ; and whoever had not dressed, armed himself, saddled his horse, mounted and

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appeared before the palace in eight minutes, was put under arrest for fourteen days. I lost in one year three horses, which had either broken their legs in jumping ditches or died of exhaustion. In short, I cannot give a better picture of this service than by saying that the bodyguard lost more men and horses in one year's peace than they did during the following year in two battles.

We had at this time three stations : in the winter, Berlin ; in the spring, Charlottenburg ; and Potsdam, or wherever the King went, during the summer. The six officers of the Guard dined with the King and, on gala days, with the Queen.

I had scarcely been six weeks a cadet before the King took me aside one day after parade and, having examined me for nearly half an hour on various subjects, commanded me to come and speak to him on the morrow. His intention, apparently, was to find out whether the accounts that had been given him of my memory were exaggerated ; and, in order to prove me, he gave me the names of fifty soldiers to learn by rote, which I did in five minutes. He then repeated the contents of two letters, which I immediately translated into French and Latin ; the one I wrote, the other I dictated. He afterwards ordered me to trace, immediately, a landscape from nature. This I executed with



FREDERICK THE GREAT

[*face p. 8*]

equal success ; whereupon he gave me a cornet's commission in his bodyguard.

The King not only presented me with a commission, but equipped me splendidly for the service. Thus did I suddenly find myself a courtier and an officer in the finest, bravest and best disciplined corps in Europe. My good fortune seemed unlimited when, in the month of August 1743, the King selected me to go and instruct the Silesian Cavalry in the new manœuvres, an honour never before granted to a youth of eighteen.

I have already said we were garrisoned at Berlin during winter, where the officers' table was at Court ; and as my reputation had preceded me, no one could have been better received there or have lived more pleasantly. Frederick commanded me to visit the *literati* whom he had invited to his Court : Maupertius, Jordon, La Metrie and Pollnitz were all of my acquaintance. My days were employed in the duties of an officer, and my nights in acquiring knowledge. Pollnitz was my guide and friend. My happiness was well worth envying. In 1743 I was five feet eleven inches in height, and Nature had endowed me with every manly attribute. I lived, as I vainly imagined, without inciting enmity or malice, and my mind was wholly occupied with the desire of earning fame.

Bt

I had hitherto remained ignorant of love, and had been terrified from illicit commerce by beholding the dreadful objects in the hospital at Potsdam. During the winter of 1743 the nuptials of His Majesty's sister to the King of Sweden were celebrated, and I, as officer of my corps, had the honour to mount guard and escort her as far as Stettin. Here first did my heart feel a passion of which, in the course of my history, I shall have frequent occasion to make mention.

The object of my love was one whom I can only remember at present with reverence ; and as I write not romance but facts, I shall here briefly say that ours were mutually the first fruits of affection. Amid the tumult inseparable from occasions like these, in which it was my duty to maintain order, a thief had the adroitness to steal my watch and cut away a part of the gold fringe which hung from the waistcoat of my uniform, escaping unperceived. This accident brought upon me the raillery of my comrades, and the lady I have alluded to took occasion to console me by saying it should be her care that I should be no loser. Her words were accompanied by a look I could not misunderstand, and a few days after I thought myself the happiest of mortals. The name, however, of this high-born lady is a secret which must descend with me to the grave ;

and though my silence concerning this incident throws obscurity over a part of my life which might otherwise be clear, I would rather incur this reproach than become ungrateful toward my best friend and benefactress.¹

I lived at this time perfectly happy at Berlin, and was highly esteemed. The King took every opportunity to testify his approbation; my mistress supplied me with more money than I could spend, and I was presently the best equipped, and made the greatest figure, of any officer of the whole corps.

The style in which I lived was soon noticed, for I had only received from my father's heritage the estate of Great Scharlach, the rental of which was eight hundred dollars a year—a sum far from sufficient to pay my expenses. My amour in the meantime remained a secret from my best and most intimate friends. Twice was my absence from Potsdam and Charlottenburg discovered and I was put under arrest; but the King seemed satisfied with the excuse I made—that I had been hunting—and smiled as he granted my pardon.

Never did the days of youth glide away with more apparent success and pleasure than during these my first years at Berlin. But this good fortune was, alas, destined to be of short duration.

¹ Her name can be given now. She was the Princess Amelia, sister of Frederick the Great.—[ED.]

At the beginning of September 1744, war again broke out between the houses of Austria and Prussia. We marched with all speed towards Prague, traversing Saxony without opposition.

All monarchs going to war have right on their side ; and the churches of both parties resound with prayers and appeals to Divine Justice for the success of their arms. That Frederick was no exception to this rule I myself was a witness.

If I am not mistaken, the King's army arrived before Prague on the 14th¹ of September, and that of General Schwerin, which had passed through Silesia, arrived the next day on the other side of the Moldau. In this position we were obliged to wait for some days for pontoons, without which we could not establish communication between the two armies.

The height called Zischka which overlooks the city being guarded by only a few Croats, was instantly seized without opposition by some grenadiers ; and the batteries erected at the foot of that mountain being ready on the fifth day, played with such success on the old town with bombs and red-hot cannon balls that it was set on fire. The King made every effort to take the city before Prince Charles could bring his army from the Rhine to its relief.

¹ *rectius* 2nd.—[ED.]

General Harsh thought proper to capitulate after a siege of twelve¹ days, during which not more than five hundred men of the garrison at the outside were killed and wounded, though eighteen thousand men were made prisoners.

Thus far we had met with no opposition. The Imperial army, however, under the command of Prince Charles of Lorraine, having quitted the banks of the Rhine, was advancing to save Bohemia.

During this campaign we saw the enemy only at a distance ; but the Austrian light troops, being twice as numerous as ours, prevented us from foraging. Winter was approaching. Dearth and hunger determined Frederick to retreat, although there was not the slightest hope of obtaining food from the countries in our rear, which we had entirely laid waste as we advanced. The severity of the season in the month of November rendered all the soldiers impatient of their hardships ; and accustomed to conquer, the Prussians were ashamed of, and grumbled at, retreat. The enemy's light troops facilitated desertion, and in a few weeks we lost about thirty thousand men.

No one could be better qualified to give a faithful history of this campaign than myself ; for I not only performed the office of adjutant

¹ *rectius* six.—[ED.]

to the King when he went to reconnoitre or choose a place for camping, but it was my duty to provide forage for headquarters. The King having only permitted me to take six volunteers from the bodyguard to execute this latter duty, I was obliged to add to them lancers and hussars, with whom I was continually on the move. I was peculiarly fortunate on two occasions, happening to come after the enemy when they had left loaded waggons and bundles of forage.

I seldom passed the night in my tent during this campaign, and my indefatigable activity earned the favour and entire confidence of Frederick. Nothing so much contributed to inspire me with emulation as the public praises I received, and my enthusiasm prompted me to perform wonders. The campaign, however, but ill supplied me with opportunities to display my youthful ardour.

At length no one durst leave the camp, notwithstanding the extreme shortness of provisions, because of the innumerable clouds of pandours¹ and hussars that hovered around everywhere.

No sooner had we arrived in Silesia than the

¹ Men of Serbian origin who served in the Austrian army as light infantry. They came originally from the district about the village of Pandour, and fought more or less as free-lances, hanging about the skirts of the enemy's army and continually harassing it. They were armed with a musket, pistols, an Hungarian sabre, and two Turkish poignards, and were regarded with terror by all who encountered them.—[ED.]

King's bodyguard were sent to Berlin, there to remain in winter quarters.

One day while at Bennischen I was ordered out with a detachment of thirty hussars and twenty lancers on a foraging party. I had posted my hussars in a convent and had gone myself with the lancers to a mansion-house in order to seize the carts necessary to convey the hay and straw from a neighbouring farm. An Austrian lieutenant of hussars, who was concealed with thirty-six cavalrymen in a wood, having noticed the weakness of my escort, took advantage of the moment when all my men were employed in loading the carts, seized our sentry, and then fell suddenly upon them, taking them all prisoners in the farmyard. I was sitting in the dining-room at the time beside the lady of the house, and saw the whole thing through the window. I was furious at my negligence, but could do nothing. The lady wanted to hide me when the firing was heard in the farmyard. By good fortune, however, the hussars, whom I had stationed in the convent, learnt from a peasant that there was an Austrian detachment in the wood. They had seen us enter the farmyard and at once rode full speed to our aid, arriving not two minutes after my men had been made prisoners. I rejoined them on the other side of the house, and it is difficult to describe the pleasure which I

experienced as I put myself at their head. Some of the enemy's party escaped through a back door, but we made two and twenty prisoners, including a lieutenant. They had two men killed and one wounded, and two of my lancers were cut down with sabres in the hayloft where they were at work.

After this little incident we continued our foraging with more caution: the horses we had captured helped to pull the carts; and after raising a contribution of one hundred and fifty ducats from the convent, which I distributed myself among the soldiers to ensure their silence, we returned to the army, from which we were distant about two leagues.

The King was at dinner when I entered his tent. Having been absent all night, everyone thought I had been captured, as that fate had befallen many others the same day. The instant I entered, the King asked me if I had returned alone.

"No, please your Majesty," answered I; "I have brought five and twenty loads of forage and twenty-two prisoners, with their officer and horses."

The King commanded me to sit down, and, turning towards the English Ambassador who was near him, laid his hand on my shoulder and said:

“ C’est un matador de ma jeunesse ! ”

He asked me few questions, and to those he did ask I replied trembling. In a few minutes he rose from the table, glanced at the prisoners, hung the Order of Merit round my neck, commanded me to go and take some rest, and set off with his party.

The embarrassment I felt at my position may be imagined : I deserved to be broken for my unpardonable negligence, instead of which I was rewarded. An instance, this, of the enormous part chance plays in our affairs ! How many generals have gained victories by their very mistakes, which have afterwards been attributed to their genius ! It is plain that the sergeant of hussars who rescued me and my men by coming up with his party in the nick of time was much better entitled than I was to the reward I had received. On how many occasions have I since met with disgrace and punishment when I deserved reward ! My anxiety lest the truth should be discovered was extreme, especially when I remembered how many people were in the secret. As I did not want money, I gave the sergeants twenty ducats each and the soldiers one, in order to ensure their silence which, as I was a favourite with them, they readily promised. I, however, was determined to declare the truth at the

very first opportunity, and this happened a few days after.

We were on the march and I, as cornet, was at the head of my company when the King, advancing, beckoned me to come to him, and bade me tell him exactly how the affair had happened. This question at first made me certain that I had been betrayed, but seeing that the King looked anything but angry I recovered my composure and told him the whole truth. He was clearly astonished, but at the same time I could see that he was pleased with my sincerity. He spoke to me for half an hour, not as a King but as a father, praised my candour, and ended with the following words, which I shall never forget :

“ Trust the advice which I have given you ; depend wholly upon me, and I will make you a man.”

It may easily be imagined how greatly my gratitude to the King was increased by this kindness, and from that moment my only desire was to live and die in his service. The confidence which he placed in me was soon seen, and I received frequent marks of it the following winter at Berlin. He allowed me to be present at his conversations with the *litterati* of his Court, and my happiness was complete.

This same winter I received more than five

hundred ducats as presents. Such good fortune, however, could not but excite jealousy, which soon began to manifest itself on every side. I had too little deceit for a courtier, and my heart was too open and frank.

CHAPTER II

It was about the middle of December when we reached Berlin, and here I was received with open arms. I became less cautious in my amour than formerly, and perhaps was more narrowly observed. A lieutenant of the Foot Guards having indulged himself in some very impertinent jokes on the subject of my amour, I bestowed on him the epithet he deserved. We drew our swords, and he was wounded.

On the following Sunday, when I presented myself to pay my respects to His Majesty on parade, he said to me as he passed :

“ Storm and thunder shall rend your heart. Beware ! ”¹

He added nothing more.

Shortly afterwards I was a few minutes late on parade. The King noticed it, placed me under arrest, and sent me to the Foot Guards' depot at Potsdam. When I had been there a fortnight, Colonel Wartensleben came into my room and advised me to petition for pardon. I was at that time too much a novice in the ways of the Court to follow his advice, nor did I even

¹ A common expression with Frederick when he was angry.

notice that the man who gave it was himself a most subtle courtier. I complained bitterly that I had been deprived of my liberty for so long for a fault which was usually punished by three, or at most six, days' arrest.

Eight days later the King came to Potsdam, whereupon I was sent by General Bourke to Berlin with some letters without having seen the King. On my return I presented myself to him on parade, and, as our squadron was garrisoned at Berlin, I asked him :

" Does it please your Majesty that I should rejoin my corps ? "

" Whence came you ? " said he.

" From Berlin."

" And where were you before you went to Berlin ? "

" Under arrest."

" Then you must remain under arrest."

I was not set at liberty till three days before our departure for Silesia, whither we marched with the utmost speed at the beginning of May, to begin our second campaign.

Here I must relate an event which happened that winter, which became the source of all my misfortunes. This error—if innocence can be error—was the cause whereby the most faithful and best of subjects became immersed in scenes of wretchedness, and was the victim of misery from his nineteenth to his sixtieth year of age.

I am convinced that this true narrative, supported by the most authentic testimony, will fully vindicate my honour and my future memory.

Francis, Baron Trenck was the son of my father's brother, consequently my cousin-german. Being a commander of pandours in the Austrian service, and grievously wounded in Bavaria in 1743, he wrote to my mother informing her that he intended to make me, her eldest son, his universal legatee. This letter, to which I returned no answer, was sent to me at Potsdam. I was so satisfied with my situation—as, indeed, I had so many reasons to be, considering the kindness with which the King treated me—that I would not have exchanged my good fortune for all the treasures of the Great Mogul.

On the 12th of February, 1744, being at Berlin, I was in company with Captain Jaschinsky, Commander of the Bodyguard (the captain of which ranks as colonel in the army), together with Lieutenant Studnitz and Cornet Wagnitz. The latter was my field comrade, and is at present the general officer commanding the cavalry of Hesse-Cassel. The Austrian Trenck became the subject of our conversation, and Jaschinsky asked if I was his kinsman. I answered, "Yes," and immediately mentioned the fact of his having made me his heir.

“ And what answer have you returned ? ”
said Jaschinsky.

“ None at all.”

The whole company then observed that I was much to blame for not having answered, and that the least I could do would be to thank him for his good wishes and entreat a continuance of them. Jaschinsky further added, “ Ask him to send you some of his fine Hungarian horses for your own use, and give me the letter ; I will send it to him through Mr. Bossart, of the Saxon Embassy, on condition that you will give me one of the horses. This correspondence is a family and not a State affair ; I will be responsible for the consequences.”

I immediately took my commanding officer’s advice and sat down to write, and had those who suspected me thought proper to make the least enquiry into the facts of the case the four witnesses who read what I wrote could have attested my innocence and have proved its genuineness. I gave my letter open to Jaschinsky, who sealed and sent it himself. I must omit none of the incidents concerning this letter, for it is the sole cause of all my sufferings. I shall therefore here relate an incident which occasioned the first of the unjust suspicions which now began to be entertained against me.

One of my grooms, with two led horses, was

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among those who were captured by Trenck's pandours. When I returned to the camp, I was ordered to accompany the King on a reconnoitring party. My horse was too tired, and I had no other, so I informed His Majesty of my embarrassment, and he immediately made me a present of a fine English thoroughbred. Some days after, I was exceedingly astonished to see my groom return with my two horses and a pandour trumpeter, who brought me a letter containing, as nearly as I can remember, the following words :

The Austrian Trenck is not at war with the Prussian Trenck, but, on the contrary, is happy to have recovered these horses from his hussars and to return them to whom they first belonged.

I went the same day to pay my respects to the King. He received me with great coldness, and said, " Since your cousin has returned your own horses to you, you have no more need of mine."

There were too many who envied me to suppose that these words would escape repetition. The return of the horses seemed infinitely to have increased the suspicion which Frederick entertained against me. It is for this reason that I dwell upon this and such-like small incidents ; they are necessary for my own justification and, were it possible, for that of the King.

We marched for Silesia, to enter upon our second campaign, which, to the Prussians, was as bloody and murderous as it was glorious.

The King's headquarters were fixed at the convent of Kamenz, where we rested fourteen days, the army remaining in billets. Prince Charles, instead of following us into Bohemia, had the imprudence to occupy the plain of Striegau, so we already concluded his army was beaten. Those who understand military tactics can judge whether a well- or ill-disciplined army, in an open plain, should be victorious.

The army hastily left its billets, and in twenty-four hours was in order of battle ; and on the 14th of June, eighteen thousand bodies lay stretched on the plain of Striegau. The allied armies of Austria and Saxony were totally defeated. The bodyguard was on the right, and, previous to the attack, the King said to our squadron, " Prove to-day, my children, that you are my bodyguard, and give no Saxon quarter."

We made three attacks on the cavalry and two on the infantry. Nothing could withstand a squadron like this, which for men, horses, courage and experience was assuredly the finest in the world. Our corps alone took seven standards and five pair of colours, and in less than an hour the affair was over. I received a pistol shot in my right hand, my horse was

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desperately wounded, and I was obliged to change him for the third charge.

The day after the battle all the officers were rewarded with the Order of Merit. For my part, I remained four weeks among the wounded at Schweidnitz, where there were sixteen thousand men under the torture of the army surgeons, many of them not getting their wounds dressed till the third day.

It was nearly three months before I recovered the use of my hand ; nevertheless, I rejoined my corps, continued to perform my duty, and, as usual, accompanied the King when he went to reconnoitre. For some time past he had placed great confidence in me, and his kindness towards me continually increased, which raised my gratitude even to enthusiasm. During this campaign I also performed the duties of adjutant.

I must here mention an adventure that happened at this time. I was exceedingly fond of shooting, in which, notwithstanding it was severely forbidden, I indulged on every possible occasion. One day, as I was returning laden with pheasants, judge of my astonishment and fear when I saw that the army had decamped and that it would be only with considerable difficulty that I should be able to overtake the rearguard. In my distress I applied to an officer of hussars, who instantly

lent me his horse, by which means I was able to rejoin my corps, which always marched as the vanguard. Mounting my own horse, I rode tremblingly to the head of my own division, which it was my duty to precede. The King, however, had noticed my absence, or, rather, had been reminded of it by my commanding officer, who for some time past had been my enemy. Just as the army halted to encamp, the King rode up to me and signalled me to approach.

"So you've got back from shooting, then?" said he.

"Yes, your Majesty. I hope——"

Here he interrupted me and said, "Well, well, this time I shall take no further notice of it, remembering Potsdam; however, let me find you more attentive to your duty in future."

So ended this affair, for which I deserved to have been broken. I must remind my readers that by the words *remembering Potsdam* the King meant that he remembered I had been punished too severely the winter before, and that my present pardon was intended as a compensation.

I now approach that epoch when my misfortunes began, and with them the martyrdom that attended me until my hairs grew grey.

A few days after the battle of Sarau the usual camp postman brought me a letter from my

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cousin Trenck, the colonel of pandours, antedated at Effek by four months, of which the following is a copy :

Your letter of the 12th of February from Berlin informs me that you desire to have some Hungarian horses. On these you would come and attack me and my pandours. I saw with pleasure during the last campaign that the Prussian Trenck was a good soldier, and in order that I might give you some proof of my attachment I then returned the horses which my men had taken from you. If, however, you wish to have Hungarian horses, you must take mine from me in like manner on the field of battle. Or, should you think fit, come and join one who will receive you with open arms like his friend and son, and who will procure you every advantage you can desire.

At first I was terrified at reading this letter, yet could not help smiling. Cornet Wagnitz, now general officer commanding the Hesse-Cassel forces, and Lieutenant Grotthausen, both now alive and then present, were my camp companions. I gave them the letter to read, and they laughed at its contents. We decided to show it to our colonel, Jaschinsky, under promise of secrecy, and it was accordingly shown him within an hour after it was received. I must call attention again to the fact that it was this Colonel Jaschinsky who on the 12th of February the same year, at Berlin, had persuaded me to write to my cousin, the Austrian Trenck ; that he had

received the letter open and had undertaken to send it to its address ; also that in that letter I had asked him in jest to send me some Hungarian horses, and had promised one to Jaschinsky should they ever arrive. The colonel read the letter with an air of surprise ; we laughed and, as it was already being whispered throughout the army that in consequence of our late victory detachments would be sent to Hungary, Jaschinsky said, " We shall now go and take Hungarian horses for ourselves." Here the conversation ended, and I, little suspecting its future consequences, returned to my tent.

I must here make the following observations. Firstly, I had not noticed the date of the letter brought by the postman, which, as I have said, was ante-dated by four months. This, however, the colonel did not fail to observe. Secondly, it is more than probable that the letter was a net spread for me by the colonel himself. The return of my horses during the preceding campaign had been the subject of a good deal of talk. It is possible that Jaschinsky had the King's orders to watch me, but more probable that he persuaded me to write to Trenck only in order that he might entrap me by a fictitious answer. Certain it is that my cousin affirmed to his death that he never received any letter from me, and consequently

could not send any answer. I must, therefore, conclude that the letter was forged.

Jaschinsky was at this time one of the King's favourites—his spy over the army, a tale-bearer, an inventor of lies and calumnies. Some years after the event of which I am now speaking the King was obliged to break him and banish him from the country. He was at this time also the paramour of the beauteous Madame Brossart, wife of the Saxon Resident at Berlin, and there can be little doubt that this forged letter was, by her means, conveyed to some Saxon or Austrian post-office and thence forwarded to me, its addressee. He had daily opportunities of infusing suspicions into the King's mind concerning me and, unknown to me, of pursuing his diabolical plan. I must likewise add that he was indebted to me to the tune of four hundred ducats. At that time I always had a plentiful supply of money, and this booty became his own when I was arrested and, untried, thrown into prison. In like manner he seized on the greater part of my camp kit and belongings. During our first campaign we had quarrelled because I had caught him beating one of my servants. We were even going to fight a duel with pistols had not Colonel Winterfeld interfered and made peace between us. Jaschinsky was a Lithuanian, and by nature obstinate and revengeful ; and

from that day I had good reason to believe he sought my destruction.

God only knows what were the means he took to excite the King's suspicions, for it is incredible that Frederick, considering his professions of public justice, should treat me in the manner he did without a hearing, without examination and without a court-martial. This has ever remained a mystery to me, and one which the King alone could have explained. Afterwards he was convinced that I was innocent, but my sufferings had been too cruel and the miseries he had inflicted too terrible for me ever to hope for compensation.

It must ever remain incomprehensible that a monarch so clear-sighted, himself the daily witness of my demeanour, one well acquainted with mankind and knowing that I wanted neither money, honour, nor preferment—I say it is incomprehensible that he should really suppose me guilty. I take God to witness, and all those who knew me in prosperity and misfortune, that I never harboured a thought of betraying my country. How could anybody possibly suspect me? I was neither a madman nor an idiot. In my eighteenth year I was a cornet in the bodyguard, adjutant to the King, and possessed his favour and confidence in the highest degree. His presents to me in one year amounted to fifteen hundred dollars.

I kept seven horses and four liveried grooms. My relations held high offices, both civil and military. I was fanatically devoted to my King and country, and coveted nothing.

The day after I received this letter I was conducted, unheard, unaccused, unjudged, and like a criminal, from the army by fifty hussars, and imprisoned in the fortress of Glatz. I was allowed to take with me three horses and my servants, but the whole of my kit was left behind, and I never saw it again—for the very good reason that Jaschinsky purloined it. My commission was given to Cornet Schatzel, and I was cashiered without being told why. No legal enquiries were made, everything was done by the King's command.

On my arrival at Glatz I was imprisoned in a room belonging to the officer of the guard. My servants were allowed to wait on me, and I was permitted to walk on the ramparts. I did not want money, for there was only a detachment from the garrison regiment in the citadel of Glatz, the officers of which were all poor. I soon had both friends and freedom, and the rich prisoner kept open table every day.

Those only who had known me in the ardour of my youth, who had witnessed how high I had risen and the good fortune that had attended me at Berlin, can imagine what my feelings were at finding myself thus suddenly cast from my

position. I wrote submissively to the King, requesting to be tried by court-martial, and not desiring any favour if I should be found guilty. This haughty tone in a youth was displeasing to him, and I received no answer. Thus was I thrown into despair, and I resolved to use every possible means to obtain my liberty.

My first care was to establish, through the intervention of an officer, a correspondence with the object of my heart. She answered that she was far from supposing I had entertained the least thought treacherous to my country, and that she knew too well I was incapable of dissimulation. She blamed the precipitate anger and unjust suspicions of the King, promised me speedy aid, and sent me a thousand ducats.

Had I at this critical moment possessed a prudent and intelligent friend who could have calmed my impatience, nothing might have been more easy than to have obtained pardon of the King by proving my innocence ; even, it may be, to have induced him to punish my enemies. But the officers who were then at Glatz fed the flame of discontent. They supposed that the money I distributed so freely came from Hungary, and advised me not to allow my freedom to depend upon the will of the King, but to enjoy it in spite of him. This advice was not

unnaturally acceptable to one who, till then, had never encountered anything but good fortune, and who consequently supported the reverse with impatience. I could not make up my mind easily, however, for it was difficult to resolve to abandon my country, and especially Berlin.

Five months soon passed away in prison ; peace was concluded, the King returned to his capital, my commission in the Guards was bestowed on another, when Lieutenant Piaschky, of Fouquet's regiment, and Ensign Reitz, who often mounted guard over me, proposed that they and I should escape together. I yielded ; our plan was fixed, and every preparatory step taken.

At that time there was another prisoner at Glatz, a Swiss named Manget, a captain of cavalry in the Natzmerschen Guards, who had been broken and condemned by court-martial to ten years' imprisonment, with an allowance of only four rix-dollars a month. Having done this man a kindness, I resolved to rescue him from bondage at the same time as I obtained freedom for myself. I told him my plan, and proposed that he should escape with me. He accepted, and certain measures were taken ; yet were we betrayed by this vile man, who thus purchased pardon and liberty.

Piaschky, informed that Reitz was arrested,

saved himself by deserting. I denied the fact in the presence of Manget, with whom I was confronted, and bribed the officer who presided over the enquiry with a hundred ducats. By this means Reitz only suffered a year's imprisonment and the loss of his commission. I was afterwards closely confined in my room for having endeavoured to corrupt the King's officers, and was guarded with greater caution.

Here I will interrupt my narrative for a moment to relate the sequel to Captain Manget's treachery. Three years after he had betrayed me—that is to say, in 1749—I met him by chance at Warsaw, and it is not difficult to imagine the way in which I received him. I flogged him with my cane, and he challenged me to fight him with pistols. Captain Heucking, of the Polish Guards, was my second. We both fired simultaneously; I shot him through the neck, and he fell dead on the spot. He alone of all my enemies ever died by my own hand, and well he merited his end for his cowardly treachery towards the two brave fellows of whom I have spoken, and still more so with respect to myself, who had been his benefactor. I candidly confess I have never reproached myself for this duel, by which I sent a rascal out of the world.

To return to my tale. My imprisonment at Glatz now became more untoward and severe.

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The King's suspicions were increased, as well as his anger, by my late attempt to escape. I began to consider my situation, and determined either on flight or death. The length and closeness of my confinement became insupportable for one of my impatient temper.

I had always had the garrison on my side, nor was it possible to prevent me from making friends among them. They knew that I had money, and in a poor garrison regiment, the officers of which were all dissatisfied, most of them having been drafted from other corps and sent thither as a punishment, it was not difficult to find fellow spirits. My scheme was as follows :

My window looked towards the city and was ninety feet from the ground, being in the tower of the citadel, out of which it would be useless to get without having first found a place of refuge in the city. This an officer undertook to procure me, and prevailed upon an honest soap-boiler to grant me a hiding-place. I then notched my penknife and sawed through three iron bars ; but this method being too tedious, since it was necessary to file away eight bars from my window before I could pass through, another officer procured me a file, which I was obliged to use with caution lest I should be overheard by the sentries. Having completed this task, I cut my leather portmanteau into

thongs, sewed them end to end, added the sheets of my bed, and descended safely from this astonishing height.

It was raining, the night was dark, and everything seemed propitious, but I had to wade through a moat full of mud before I could enter the city, a circumstance I had not taken into account. I sunk up to the knees, and after long struggling and incredible efforts to extricate myself was obliged to call the sentry and tell him to go and inform the Governor that Trenck was stuck fast in the moat !

My misfortune was the greater on this occasion because General Fouquet was then Governor of Glatz. He was one of the cruellest of men. He had been wounded by my father in a duel, and the Austrian Trenck had not only captured his baggage in 1744, but had also made a levy on the County of Glatz. He was therefore an enemy to the very name of Trenck, nor did he lose any opportunity of giving proofs of his enmity. On the present occasion, therefore, he left me standing in the mud till noon, the sport of the soldiers. I was then drawn out, half dead, only to be imprisoned again, and shut up for the rest of the day without water to wash with. It is difficult to imagine the state I was in, for I was exhausted and covered with mud, my long hair having fallen into the mire, and being caked with it. In

this condition I remained till the next day, when two fellow prisoners were sent to assist and clean me.

My imprisonment now became more unbearable than ever. However, I still had eighty louis d'or in my purse, which had been overlooked on my removal to another dungeon, and these afterwards did me good service.

CHAPTER III

I READ much during my confinement at Glatz, for books were allowed me. Time, therefore, became less tedious. But when the love of liberty awoke, when fame and affection called me to Berlin, and my baulked hopes painted the wretchedness of my situation, when I remembered that my loved country, judging by appearances, could not but pronounce me a traitor, then was I hourly impelled to rush upon the naked bayonets of my guards.

Big with such-like thoughts, eight days had now elapsed since my last fruitless attempt to escape, when an event happened which would appear incredible were not I, the principal actor in the scene, alive to attest its truth. This incident will prove that adventurous and even rash daring will render the most improbable undertakings possible, and that desperate attempts may often make a general more fortunate and famous than the wisest and best concerted plans. One day Major Doo¹ came to visit me, accompanied by an

¹ This same Doo was Governor of Glatz during the Seven Years' War, and having been surprised by General Laudohn, was made prisoner, which occasioned the loss of Glatz. The King broke him with infamy and banished him with contempt. In 1764 he came to Vienna, where I gave

officer of the guard and an adjutant. After examining every corner of my room, he started a tirade against me, taxing me with a second crime in endeavouring to obtain my liberty and adding that this would undoubtedly increase the anger of the King. My blood boiled at the word 'crime.' He talked of patience ; I asked how long the King had ordered me to be imprisoned. He replied that a traitor to his country who negotiated with the enemy cannot be condemned for a definite time, and must depend on the King for grace and pardon.

Unable to contain myself, I snatched his sword (on which my eyes had for some time been fixed) from his side, sprang through the doorway, tumbled the sentry from the top of the stairs to the bottom, passed the men who happened to be drawn up outside the prison door to relieve guard, attacked them sword in hand, surprised them by the way in which I laid about me, wounded four of them, made my way through the rest, sprang over the breastwork of the ramparts, and, sword in hand, leaped this amazing height without receiving any injury. I jumped the second

him alms. He was by birth an Italian, a selfish, wicked man, and while major under the command of Fouquet at Glatz brought misery to many. He was the creature of Fouquet, without birth or merit ; crafty, malignant but handsome, and having debauched his patron's daughter, afterwards married her ; whence at first his good, and at length his ill, fortune. He lacked knowledge how to defend a fortress against the enemy, and his covetousness rendered him easy to corrupt.

wall with equal safety and good fortune. None of the men's muskets was loaded ; no one dared jump after me ; and in order to follow me they were obliged to go round through the town to the gate of the citadel ; so I had fully half an hour's start.

A sentry, however, in a narrow passage, endeavoured to oppose my flight, but I parried his bayonet and wounded him in the face. A second sentry, meanwhile, ran from the out-works to seize me from behind, and to avoid him I made a spring at the palisade. Unluckily, however, I caught my foot, and at the same time received a bayonet wound in my upper lip. I was surrounded in a moment, beaten with the butts of the men's muskets, and dragged back to prison, struggling and defending myself like a madman.

Certain it is that, had I jumped the palisade more carefully and despatched the sentry who opposed me, I might have escaped and gained the mountains. Thus might I have fled to Bohemia for, having a sword, I should not have feared any single opponents and could easily have outstripped the swiftest runners.

Needless to say, the severities of my imprisonment were now increased : two sentries and a non-commissioned officer were locked in with me, and were themselves guarded by sentries outside. I was also in a sorry state, for I had

been beaten on the head by the butts of their muskets, I was spitting blood, and my right foot was badly swollen. It was a month before I was whole again.

To my dismay, it was now reported to me for the first time that the King had condemned me to a year's imprisonment only, in order that he might find out, meanwhile, whether his suspicions were well founded. My mother had petitioned for me, and was answered, 'Your son must remain in prison for a year, as a punishment for his rash correspondence.' Of this I was ignorant, and it was said in Glatz that my imprisonment was for life. I had only three weeks longer to wait when I made this rash attempt.

Once more, then, I was in a dungeon, and no sooner was I there than I began to form new projects of escape. I first gained the friendship of my guards. I had money, and this, with the pity I inspired, could effect anything among discontented Prussian soldiers. Soon I had gained over thirty-two men who were ready to carry out any order I might give. With two or three exceptions they were unacquainted with each other, consequently they could not all be betrayed at a time. I chose a non-commissioned officer, Nicholai, to head them.

The garrison consisted only of a hundred and twenty men from the garrison regiment, the

rest being dispersed through the County of Glatz, and four officers in command of them, three of whom were in my interest. Everything was prepared ; swords and pistols were concealed in the stove in my prison. We intended to release all the prisoners, and retire, with drums beating, into Bohemia.

Unfortunately an Austrian deserter, to whom Nicholai had imparted our design, went and disclosed our conspiracy to the authorities. The Governor immediately sent his adjutant to the citadel with orders that the officer on guard should arrest Nicholai and, with his men, take possession of the casemate.

Nicholai was on the guard, and the lieutenant was my friend, and being in the secret, he gave the signal that all was discovered. Only Nicholai knew all the conspirators, several of whom were that day on guard. He instantly made up his mind, and jumping into the casemate, cried, "To arms, comrades! We are betrayed!" All followed him to the guard-house, where they seized the ammunition, for the officer in charge had only eight men with him, and, threatening to shoot any man who offered resistance, came to deliver me from my prison. But the iron door was too strong and the time too short for it to be demolished ; it was in vain that Nicholai called to me to assist them. Perceiving, therefore, that nothing more

could be done for me, this brave man marched at the head of nineteen others to the gate of the citadel, where he forced the non-commissioned officer and ten men on guard to accompany him, and arrived safely at Braunau, in Bohemia. Before the news had spread through the city, and men had been collected for the pursuit, they were nearly half way on their journey.

Two years afterwards I met this extraordinary man at Offenburg, where he was employed as a writer. He immediately entered my service, and, indeed, became a faithful friend, but died some months later of a fever at my quarters in Hungary. His memory will ever be dear to me.

Now indeed was I exposed to all the storms of ill fortune. I was tried under the charge of conspiring to corrupt the officers and soldiers of the King, and was commanded to name my conspirators. To these questions, of course, I made no answer, save to declare that I was innocent, and ought not to be in prison, that I had been unjustly broken, that I had never been tried at all, that I had never given any undertaking not to attempt to escape, that there was nothing extraordinary in an innocent man seeking to defend his honour and regain his liberty, and, lastly, that I should continue to try to escape, being determined to persist till I should either succeed or lose my life in the attempt.

I was taken back to my prison and guarded more rigorously than ever. I was not, however, put in irons, for it was a law in Prussia that no gentleman or officer should be loaded with chains unless he had been handed over to the executioner. But the soldiers were withdrawn from my room, and to my despair I found that I had spent all my money. To crown all, my mistress at Berlin, with whom I had always managed to correspond, in spite of all that my persecutors could do, at last wrote: 'The evil cannot be remedied—I dare do no more—escape if you can. I shall ever remain faithful to you. Adieu, unhappy friend; you deserved a better fate.' This letter was a thunderbolt. The only consolation I had left was the fact that the officers were not suspected, and that it was their duty to visit my room several times a day. I was not, therefore, altogether without hope.

Another adventure now befell me. A lieutenant named Bach, a Dane, mounted guard every fourth day. He was the terror of the whole garrison, for, being a perfect master of arms, he was continually involved in some quarrel or other, and generally left his marks behind him. He had served in two regiments, neither of which desired to retain him, and on account of his propensities he had been sent to the garrison regiment at Glatz as a punishment.

One day, sitting beside me, Bach related how, the evening before, he had wounded a lieutenant named Schell in the arm. I replied, laughing, "Had I my liberty, I believe you would find some trouble in wounding me, for I have some skill with the sword." The blood instantly flew to his face; we wrenched a pair of foils from an old door that served me as a table, and at the first lunge I hit him on the breast. His rage became ungovernable, and he rushed out of my prison. To my astonishment, he returned in a few minutes with two swords, which he had concealed under his coat. "Now then, boaster," said he, giving me one of them, "prove what you can do." I endeavoured to pacify him by pointing out the danger, but in vain. He attacked me with the utmost fury, and I wounded him in the arm. Throwing his sword down, he fell upon my neck, kissed me and wept. At length he said: "Friend, you are my master, and you shall, by my aid, obtain your liberty as surely as my name is Bach." We bound up his arm as well as we could and he went secretly to a surgeon to have it properly dressed.

That night he returned to my room and told me that it was humanly impossible for me to escape unless the officer on guard deserted with me. He added that, although he would gladly stick to me through thick and thin, he could

not so far forget his honour and duty as to desert while he was on guard. Nevertheless, he gave me his word of honour that he would find the right man for me in a few days, and that in the meanwhile he would make active preparations for my flight. The next evening he returned, bringing with him Lieutenant Schell, whom he introduced with the words, "Here is your man." We shook hands, Schell gave me his word of honour, and thus was the affair settled and, as it proved, my liberty assured.

We soon began to deliberate on the means necessary to achieve our purpose. Schell had just come from the garrison at Habelschwerdt to the citadel of Glatz, and in two days was to mount guard over me. I have said before that I had received no more supplies from my beloved mistress, and my purse at this time only contained some six florins. It was, therefore, resolved that Bach should go to Schweidnitz and obtain money from a sure friend of mine in that city.

Here I must mention that at this period the officers and I all understood each other, Captain Roder alone excepted, who was exact, rigid, and gave trouble on all occasions. Major Quaadt was my kinsman on my mother's side, a good, friendly man, and anxious for me to escape, seeing my misfortunes were so much

increased. The four lieutenants who successively mounted guard over me were Bach, Schroeder, Lunitz and Schell. The first was the general organiser of the scheme, and made all the preparations ; Schell was to desert with me, and Schroeder and Lunitz were to follow three days later.

It is not surprising that officers of garrison regiments should be so ready to desert. They are, in general, men of violent passions, quarrelsome, overwhelmed with debts or unfit for service. They are usually sent to the garrison as a punishment, and are called the refuse of the army. Dissatisfied with their situation, their pay much reduced and despised by the troops, such men are easily induced to engage in the most desperate undertaking so long as they believe it is to their advantage. None of them can hope for their discharge, and they live in the utmost poverty. They all hoped by my means to better their misfortune, I always having had money enough ; and with money nothing is more easy than to find friends in places where each individual is desirous of escaping from slavery.

The talents of Schell were considerable. He spoke and wrote six languages and had a good knowledge of all the fine arts. He had served in Fouquet's regiment, had been injured by his colonel, who was a Pomeranian ;

and Fouquet, who was no friend to enterprising and accomplished officers, had sent him to a garrison regiment. He had twice demanded his dismissal, but the King imprisoned him instead. He then determined to avenge himself by deserting, and was ready to aid me in recovering my freedom so that by that means he might spite Fouquet.

We determined that everything should be ready by the first time Schell mounted guard, and that our project should be executed on the next. Thus as he mounted guard every four days, the eighth was to be that of our flight.

The Governor meanwhile had been informed how familiar I had become with the officers, and taking offence at this, he gave orders that my door should no longer be opened but that I should receive my food through a small window that had been made for the purpose. The care of the prison was committed to the major, and he was forbidden to eat with me under pain of being broken. These precautions, however, were ineffectual, for the officers procured a false key and remained with me half the day and night.

Captain Damnitz was imprisoned in an apartment adjoining mine. This man had deserted from the Prussian service, with the money belonging to his company, to Austria, where

he obtained a commission in his cousin's regiment. This cousin having persuaded him to serve as a spy during the campaign of 1744, he was captured on Prussian territory, recognised, tried and condemned to be hanged. Some Swedish volunteers who were then in the army, however, interested themselves on his behalf, and his sentence was reduced to imprisonment for life, with the stigma of being guilty of infamous conduct. Two years later, by the aid of his protectors, this wretch not only obtained his liberty but a lieutenant-colonel's commission. He was at this time the secret spy of the major who was in command of the prisoners, and he noticed that, in spite of the express command given to the officers, they still passed the greater part of their time in my company.

The 24th of December came, and Schell mounted guard. As soon as he had done this he entered my prison and remained with me for some time, and we arranged to escape next time he was on duty.

Lieutenant Schroeder, chancing that day to dine with the Governor, overheard orders being given to the adjutant that Schell should be removed from the guard and put under arrest. Schroeder, who was in the secret, had no doubt that we had been betrayed, not knowing that the spy Damnitz had just informed the Governor

that Schell was in my room. Accordingly, full of terror, he came running to the citadel, and said to Schell, "Save yourself; all is discovered, and you are going to be arrested immediately."

Schell might easily have assured his own safety by flight, Schroeder having taken the precaution of telling his groom to get two horses ready at once, on one of which he offered to accompany Schell into Bohemia. But such conduct was far from this worthy man. Running to my prison, he drew a corporal's sabre from under his coat and said, "We are betrayed! Follow me, only don't let me fall alive into the hands of my enemies." I would have spoken, but interrupting me and catching hold of my hand, he cried, "Come on! We have not a moment to lose!" I therefore slipped on my coat and boots, without having time to take the little money I had left, and as we went out of the prison Schell said to the sentry, "I am taking the prisoner to the officers' quarters; stand where you are."

Into this room we really went, but passed out by another door. Schell's plan was to go under the arsenal, which was not far off, gain the covered way, leap the palisade, and then escape as best we could. We had scarcely gone a hundred paces, however, before we met the adjutant and Major Quaadt. Schell started

back, sprang upon the rampart, and leaped from the wall, which was not very high at that spot. I followed, and alighted unhurt except for a slight graze on my shoulder. My poor friend, however, was not so fortunate, for he put out his ankle. He immediately drew his sword, handed it to me, and begged me to kill him and fly. He was a small, weak man, but far from complying with his request, I took him up in my arms, threw him over the palisade, jumped after him, took him on my back again, and began to run without very well knowing where I was going.

The sun had just set and it was foggy, so no one anticipated that we would run the risk of making so dangerous a leap. We heard a terrible noise behind us. Everybody in the garrison seemed to know that we had escaped, but before they could go round the citadel and through the town in order to pursue us we had got a full half league's start.

The alarm guns were fired before we had gone a hundred yards. At this Schell was very much terrified, for he knew that whenever this happened it was generally impossible to escape from Glatz, for it was essential that a fugitive should have at least two hours' start before the alarm guns were fired. As soon as they are fired all the passes are stopped by the peasants and the hussars, who are constantly

on the look-out. No sooner is a prisoner missed than the gunner runs from the guard-house and fires the cannon on the three sides of the fortress, which are kept loaded day and night for that purpose.

We were not five hundred paces from the walls when everybody before us and behind us seemed to be running. It was dusk when we made our jump, and our attempt had been as fortunate as it was wonderful. This I attributed to my presence of mind and the reputation I had already acquired, which made it thought extremely dangerous for two or even three men to attack me. Moreover, it was thought that we were well provided with arms for our defence ; it was little suspected that Schell had only his sword and I a corporal's old sabre.

Among the officers ordered to pursue us was Lieutenant Bach, my intimate friend. Captain Zerbst, of Fouquet's regiment, who had always shown the kindness of a brother towards me, met us on the Bohemian frontier, and called out to me, " Make to the left, and you will see some lone houses which are on the Bohemian frontier. The hussars have gone on straight ahead." He then rode on as though he had not seen us.

We had nothing to fear from the officers ; for the intimacy between the Prussian officers was at that time so great, and their word of

honour so sacred, that during my rigorous detention at Glatz I was once away for thirty-six hours' hunting at Neurode, the seat of Baron Stillfriede. Lunitz had taken my place in the prison, and the major was quite well aware of this when he came to make his daily visit. From this it may be gathered how great was the confidence reposed in the word of the unfortunate Trenck at Glatz, since they were not afraid of letting him leave his dungeon to go hunting on the very frontier of Bohemia. This also shows that the Governor was deceived despite his watchfulness and orders, and that a man of honour with money and a good head and heart will never want friends.

CHAPTER IV

I CARRIED Schell about three hundred yards before I set him down and looked round me, but darkness came on so fast that I could see neither town nor citadel ; consequently we ourselves could not be seen. My presence of mind did not forsake me ; ‘ Death or freedom ’ was my motto.

“ Where are we, Schell ? ” said I to my friend. “ Which way is the Bohemian frontier ? Where is the River Neisse ? ”

But Schell could make no answer : his mind was confused and he despaired of our escape. He still entreated me, however, not to allow him to be taken alive, and kept repeating that my labour was all in vain.

After having sworn by all that was sacred that I would comply with his request if it were necessary to save him from an infamous death, his spirits revived a little. He looked round and recognised some trees by which he knew we were not far from the city gates. I asked him again, “ Where is the Neisse ? ” He pointed to our right and said :

“ All Glatz has seen us flying towards the

Bohemian mountains ; it is impossible for us to escape the hussars, the passes are all guarded and we are surrounded."

At this I took him on my shoulders again and carried him to the bank of the Neisse. While taking a breather here we distinctly heard the alarm being sounded in the neighbouring villages, and the peasants, who were to help in forming the encircling ring, spreading the alarm. The Neisse was freezing cold, but I stepped into it with Schell on my back and carried him as long as I could wade. When I could no longer feel the bottom I bade him cling tightly to me and started to swim. Fortunately I felt the bottom again in about six yards, and so we got safely to the other bank.

It is hardly necessary to observe that swimming in the middle of December and remaining afterwards in the open air for eighteen hours was a somewhat severe handicap to our progress. About seven o'clock the fog was succeeded by frost and moonlight. The carrying of my friend kept me warm, it is true, but I was now very tired, while Schell had suffered everything that frost, the pain of a dislocated foot (which I in vain endeavoured to reset) and the danger of death could inflict. We were somewhat more easy in our minds, however, when we reached the opposite bank of the Neisse, for it was unlikely that anybody would pursue us on

the road to Silesia. We followed the course of the river for half an hour and, having passed the first villages that were in the line of outposts (with which Schell was perfectly acquainted), we were lucky enough to find a fisherman's boat moored to the bank. Into this we jumped, crossed the river again, and soon gained the mountains.

We now sat down awhile in the snow. Hope revived in our hearts, and we held a counsel as to what we had better do. I cut a stick to assist Schell to hop along as best he could when I was tired of carrying him, and thus we continued our way, the difficulties of which were now increased by the mountain snow.

Thus passed the night, during which, being frequently up to our middles in snow, we made but little progress. There were no paths in the mountains and there were many places that were quite impassable. Day at length appeared, and we thought that we must be close to the frontier (which is twenty English miles from Glatz) when, to our great terror, we suddenly heard the city clock strike. Overwhelmed as we were by hunger, cold, fatigue and pain, it was impossible that we could hold out through the day. After some consideration and another half-hour's toil we came to a village at the foot of the mountains on the side of which, about

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three hundred paces from us, we could see two houses standing by themselves. Here we evolved a stratagem which, as will be seen, was entirely successful.

In jumping the ramparts we had lost our hats, but Schell had managed to keep his military sash and gorgets. These we knew would give him authority among the peasants. Accordingly I cut my finger, rubbed the blood over my face, shirt and coat, and bound up my head in order to give myself the appearance of a man who was dangerously wounded. In this condition I carried Schell to the end of the wood not far from these houses. Here he tied my hands behind my back, but so that I could easily disengage them in case of need, and hobbled after me by the aid of his staff, calling for help. Two old peasants promptly appeared upon the scene, whereupon Schell ordered them to run to the village and tell a magistrate to come immediately with a cart. "This knave," added he, "has killed my horse, and in the struggle I have put out my ankle. However, I got the better of him and have bound him. Go quickly and bring a cart, for we don't want him to die before he is hanged." I then suffered myself to be led, as if half dead, into the nearest house. A peasant was despatched to the village. An old woman and a pretty girl seemed to take great pity on me and gave me some

bread and milk ; but great was our astonishment when the aged peasant called Schell by his name and told him he knew quite well that we were deserters. It appeared that, the night before, he had been in a neighbouring ale-house when an officer in pursuit of us came in and described us, relating the whole story of our flight. The peasant knew Schell because his son was serving in his company and often spoke of Schell when he was quartered at Habelschwerdt.

Presence of mind and resolution were all that were left to us now. I instantly ran to the stable while Schell detained the peasant in the house. The latter, however, was a worthy man and told us the road to Bohemia. We were still about seven miles from Glatz and had quite lost ourselves among the mountains, where we had been wandering about for many miles. The daughter followed me to the stable. I found three horses there, but no bridles. I then begged her, in a most passionate manner, to assist me. She was affected, seemed half willing to follow me and gave me two bridles. I led the horses to the door, called Schell, and helped him up on horseback. The old peasant then began to weep, and begged me not to take his horses : fortunately he lacked the courage, or perhaps the will, to prevent us.

Behold us now on horseback without hats or saddles, Schell with his sash and gorgets and I in my red regimental coat. Even now, however, we were in danger of seeing all our hopes dashed to the ground, for my horse would not stir from the door. At last, however, I prevailed upon him to move. Schell led the way, and we had hardly gone a hundred yards before we saw the peasants coming out from the village in crowds. As good luck would have it, the people had all been in church when we arrived, and the peasants whom Schell had sent were obliged to go to the church for assistance. It was nine o'clock in the morning, and had the villagers been at home we should inevitably have been captured.

Our route lay through the town of Wunshelburg, where Schell had been quartered a month before, and in which he was known to everybody. Our dress, without hats or saddles, alone proclaimed us to be deserters; but fortunately our horses went tolerably well and we were lucky enough to get through the town safely, although it contained a garrison of one hundred and eighty infantry and twelve hussars, who were stationed there on purpose to arrest deserters. Schell knew the road to Braunau, where we arrived at eleven o'clock after having met Captain Zerbst as I have before related.

Only those who have been in my situation can imagine the joy we felt as we crossed the frontier. Never during my whole life did I experience greater pleasure than I felt at this moment. My companion had risked a shameful death for me, and now after having carried him for at least twelve hours on my shoulders I had saved both him and myself. We certainly would not have suffered any man to take us back to Glatz alive. Yet this was but the first act of the tragedy in which I was doomed to be the hero ; and could I have read the book of Fate and have foreseen the forty years of fearful affliction that were to follow, my joy at my escape from Glatz would not have been wholly unalloyed. One year's patience might have appeased the irritated monarch, and the rest of my life would have been spent in happiness.

At Braunau on the Bohemian frontier I sent the two horses and the corporal's sword back to General Fouquet at Glatz. The letter which accompanied them exasperated him so much that the entire guard was obliged to run the gauntlet. He himself had declared the day before that it was quite impossible for me to escape. Thus do the mean revenge themselves on the miserable, and the tyrant on the innocent. And now I was in Bohemia, a fugitive without money,

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protector or friend, and only twenty years of age.

In the campaign of 1744 I had been quartered at Braunau with a weaver whom I had advised to bury his valuables if he wished to preserve them from being looted. This good man received us now with open arms. Two years before, I had lived in his house and had been absolute master of him and his fate. I had then nine horses and five servants, with the highest hopes for the future. But now I came as a fugitive, seeking protection, and having lost all that I had to lose.

I had but a single louis d'or in my purse, and Schell forty kreutzers, or some three shillings : with this small sum, in a strange country, we had to cure his sprain and provide for all our wants.

I was determined not to go to my cousin Trenck at Vienna, fearful that this would seem a justification of all my imputed treasons ; I wished rather to embark for the East Indies. I wrote to my mistress at Berlin, but received no answer, possibly because I could not indicate any safe mode of conveyance. My mother believed me guilty and abandoned me ; my brothers were still minors, and my friend at Schweidnitz could not aid me, having gone to Königsberg.

After three weeks at Braunau my friend

recovered from his lameness. We had been obliged to sell my watch and his scarf and gorget to supply our necessities, and had only four florins remaining. From the newspapers I now learnt that my cousin, the Austrian Trenck, was closely confined and under criminal prosecution. It may easily be imagined what effect this news had upon me.

At length I determined to travel on foot to Prussia to my mother, and obtain money from her, and afterwards enter the Russian service. Schell, whose destiny was linked to mine, would not forsake me. We assumed false names : I called myself Knert, and Schell, Lesch ; then, obtaining passports, we left Braunau like common deserters on the 21st of January, in the evening, unseen by anybody, and proceeded towards Bilitz in Poland. A friend in the town gave me a pair of pocket pistols, a musket and three ducats. These, as will be seen, came in extremely useful.

We reached Czenstochowa on the 5th of February and slept at an inn kept by a very worthy man named Lazar. He had been a lieutenant in the Austrian service, but had been pursued by ill fortune and had now become a poor innkeeper in Poland. We had not a penny in our purse and were obliged to beg for a bit of bread. The generous man told us to sit down

and eat with himself. I then told him who we were and entrusted him with the secret of our journey.

Scarcely had we supped when a carriage arrived with three people in it. It was a private carriage, with good horses, a servant and a coachman. And now followed a remarkable incident which I must relate in full.

We had met this carriage before at Olkusz, and one of its occupants had asked Schell where we were going. He had replied that our destination was Czenstochowa ; we had not the least suspicion of them, although well aware of the danger we ran by telling anybody where we were going. They stopped at the inn, saluted us indifferently, hardly seeming to notice us, and spoke little. We had not been long in bed, however, before our host came to awaken us, and told us that these pretended merchants had been sent from Prussia to arrest us ; that they had offered him first fifty then a hundred ducats if he would allow them to take us prisoner in his house and carry us into Silesia ; that he had firmly rejected the proposal though they had increased their promises ; and that at last they had given him six ducats to hold his tongue.

We clearly saw that this was an escort sent by General Fouquet to recapture us. The information they had received could only have come from one Lieutenant Mollinie, of the

garrison at Habelschwerdt, who had come to visit Schell as a friend during our stay at Braunau. He had remained with us for two days and had asked many questions concerning the road we intended to take, and he was the only person who knew it. He was probably Fouquet's spy and the cause of all that happened afterwards.

The moment I heard of this infamous piece of treachery I was all for entering the enemy's room with my pistols cocked ; Schell and Lazar, however, prevented me, and the latter entreated me to remain in his house till supplies should arrive from my mother, then we might be able to continue our journey with more ease and less danger. But his entreaties were in vain ; I was determined to go to her, for I was uncertain of the effect which my letter to her had produced. Lazar assured me that we should infallibly be attacked on the road. " So much the better," retorted I ; " that will give me an opportunity of shooting them as I would highwaymen." They departed at dawn and took the road to Warsaw. We should have gone also, but Lazar forcibly detained us and with great generosity gave us the six ducats which he had received from them. With these we bought a shirt for each of us, another pair of pocket pistols and other urgent necessities. We then took an affectionate leave of our host,

who gave us careful instructions as to our route.

Lazar had told us that our enemies had only one musket between them. I also had a musket and an excellent sabre, and each of us possessed a pair of pistols. They did not know that we were so well armed.

We took the road to Parzymiechy and had not been above an hour on the road before we saw a carriage ahead of us, and as we drew near we recognised it as that of our enemies. They were pretending that it was stuck fast in the snow and were standing round it, and when they saw us approach began to call loudly for help. This, we guessed, was a device to entrap us. Schell was not strong, they would all have fallen upon me, and we should easily have been carried off alive. Accordingly we left the road and proceeded about thirty yards from it, telling them that we had not time to give them help. At this they all ran to their carriage, pulled out their pistols, and, running full speed towards us, called out, "Stop, rascals!" We began to run too, but I suddenly turned round, presented my musket, and shot the nearest man dead on the spot. Schell fired his pistols, our pursuers did the same, and Schell received a bullet in the neck. It was now my turn. I drew my pistols and ran towards one of our assailants; he fled, I pursued him for three

hundred paces, overtook him, and as he drew his sword to defend himself, pressed upon him, and gave him a stroke with my sabre that brought him down. I immediately returned to Schell, whom I found in the grasp of two others and being dragged towards the carriage. When they saw me coming, however, they took to their heels and fled across the fields. The coachman, seeing which way the battle was going, jumped on to his box and drove off at full speed.

Schell, though saved, was wounded with a bullet in the neck and a cut on his right hand which had made him drop his sword, though he affirmed that he had run one of his adversaries through. I took a silver watch from one of the men I had killed and was going to make free with his purse when Schell shouted that a coach and six was coming down the hill. To stay would have exposed us to capture as highwaymen ; for the two fugitives who had escaped us would certainly have given evidence against us. Safety could only be found in flight. However, I snatched up the musket and hat of the first man I had killed and we then gained a copse and presently the forest. The road wound about and it was night before we reached Parzymiechy.

Schell was smeared with blood. I had bound up his wound as best I could, but there are no surgeons in Polish villages and it was only with

great difficulty that he could get along. We met two Saxon non-commissioned officers here who were recruiting for the Regiment of Guards at Dresden. My height and appearance pleased them and they immediately came up and began to talk to us. I found that they were trustworthy, so I entrusted them with our secret, told them who we were, and related the affair we had had that day with our pursuers. I had no reason to repent of my confidence in them. They helped Schell to get his wounds properly dressed, and we remained in the company of these good Saxons for seven days.

Meanwhile, I learned that of the four men who had attacked us, the coachman and one only returned to Glatz. The name of the officer who undertook this vile business was Gersdorf, and he had a hundred and fifty ducats in his pocket when found dead. If only that cursed coach had not turned up and made us take to flight! We sold the watch to a Jew for four ducats, the hat for three florins and a half, and the musket for a ducat, Schell being unable to carry it farther. A Jew surgeon sold us some plaster which we took with us and departed.

On the 19th of February we arrived at Kobylín, wholly destitute of money. I sold my coat to a Jew, who gave me four florins and a waggoner's coarse smock in exchange; I did not, however, think that I should need this

for long, as we were now drawing near to the town where my sister lived and where I hoped to get better equipped. Schell, unfortunately, grew weaker and weaker ; his wounds healed slowly and were expensive ; the cold also was injurious to him and, as he was not by nature cleanly in his person, his body soon became the harbour of every species of vermin to be picked up in Poland. We often arrived wet and weary at our smoky, reeking stove-room. Often we were obliged to lie on straw or bare boards. Wandering as we did in the midst of winter through Poland, where humanity, hospitality and pity are scarcely so much as known by name, where merciless Jews deny the poor traveller a bed, we were obliged to stray disconsolately without food and almost naked. These things can only be appreciated by those who have experienced them. My musket now and then procured us an occasional meal of tame geese or cocks and hens when these were to be had ; otherwise we never took or touched anything that was not our own. We met with Saxon and Prussian recruiters at various places, all of whom, on account of my youth and stature, were eager to inveigle me. It was highly diverting to hear them enumerate the possibilities of future promotion and how I should undoubtedly become a corporal quickly ; nor was I less merry with their ale and brandy,

given with the intent to make me drunk. Thus we had many traps to guard against, but at the same time these experiences procured us many a good meal gratis.

At Schmiegel a singular adventure befell us. The peasants of this place were dancing to a vile scraper on the violin. I took the instrument myself and played while they continued their hilarity. They were much pleased with my playing, but when I was tired and wanted to stop they obliged me, first by importunities, and then by threats, to keep on playing throughout the night. I was so tired that I thought I should have fainted. Fortunately they began to quarrel among themselves at last. Schell was sleeping on a bench and some of them fell upon his wounded hand ; he rose furious ; I seized our weapons and began to lay about me with might and main, and in the confusion we escaped without further ill treatment.

What a subject for meditation on the turns of fate did this night afford ! Only two years before I was dancing at Berlin with the daughters and sisters of kings, and here was I now in a Polish hut, a ragged, almost naked musician, playing for the sport of ignorant rustics whom I was at last obliged to fight.

I was myself the cause of the trifling misfortune that befell us on this occasion. Had not my vanity led me to show these poor

peasants that I was a musician I might have slept in peace and safety. The same vain desire of proving that I knew more than other men made me through life the continual victim of envy and slander. Had Nature, too, bestowed on me a weaker or a deformed body, I should have been less noticed, less courted, less sought, and my adventures and mishaps had been fewer. Thus the merits of a man often become his miseries, and thus the bear having learnt to dance must live and die in chains. This ardour, this vanity, or, if you like, this emulation, has, however, taught me to overcome a thousand difficulties under which others of cooler passions and more temperate desires would have sunk. May my example remain a warning and thus may my sufferings become as profitable to the world as they have been cruel to myself!

At Karger Hauland in order to prevent ourselves dying of hunger we sold a shirt and Schell's waistcoat for eighteen groschen. I had shot a pullet the day before and necessity compelled us to eat it raw. I also killed a crow, which I devoured alone, as Schell refused to taste it. Youth and hard travelling created a voracious appetite, and our eighteen groschen were soon expended.

On the 27th of February we reached Hammer, and at nine o'clock that evening I knocked at

my sister's door. A maidservant whom I knew answered the knock ; her name was Mary and she had been born and brought up in my father's house. She was terrified at seeing a sturdy fellow in a beggar's dress, so I, perceiving this, said, " Don't you know me, Mary ? " She answered, " No," so I told her who I was. I then asked whether my brother-in-law was at home, and was told that he was but that he was ill in bed. " Tell my sister, then," said I. The maid showed me into a room and presently my sister came in. She was frightened at seeing me, not knowing that I had escaped from Glatz, and went out to tell her husband. She did not return, and a quarter of an hour later Mary came in weeping and told us that her master had bid her order us to leave the house instantly or he would have us arrested. He had forcibly detained my sister and I never saw her again. What my feelings were I leave to the reader to imagine. I was too proud, too enraged to ask for money. I left the house furiously, uttering a thousand curses on its inhabitants, while the kind-hearted Mary, still weeping, slipped three ducats into my hand.

And now behold us once more in the wood, which was not above a hundred paces from the house, half dead with hunger and fatigue, not daring to enter any habitation and dragging our weary steps all night through snow and

rain, until at daybreak we came to the town of Lettel.

We had scarcely reached the wood before I exclaimed to Schell, "Does not such a sister deserve that I should burn her house over her head?" Schell possessed the virtues of moderation and forbearance in a high degree; he was my continual mentor, my guide whenever my choleric temperament was disposed to violence.

"My friend," said he, "remember that your sister may be innocent, may be withheld by her husband; besides, should the King discover we had entered her house and that she had not delivered us again into his power, she might become even more persecuted than we are. Be more charitable and remember that even if your sister should be in the wrong the time may come when her children may stand in need of your assistance and you will then have the indescribable pleasure of returning good for evil."

I shall never forget this excellent advice, which was in reality a prophecy. When my rich brother-in-law died during the Russian war his lands and houses were laid in ruins, and nineteen years later, when released from my imprisonment at Magdeburg, I had an opportunity of serving my sister's children. Such are the turns of fate and thus do improbabilities become facts. My sister justified her conduct

—Schell had guessed the truth—and during the ten years which followed my expulsion from her house, whilst I was in prison, she was all that a sister could be.

On the 5th of March we arrived at Rogasen without so much as a kreutzer to pay for our lodgings. The Jew innkeeper drove us out of his house ; we were obliged to wander about all night, and at daybreak found that we had strayed two miles from the road. We entered a peasant's cottage where an old woman was taking bread from an oven. We had no money to offer and I have never been nearer committing murder, and only for a morsel of bread to satisfy the intolerable cravings of hunger. Shuddering at the thought, I hurried away from the door and we walked fast for the two miles to Wongrowitz. There I sold my musket for a ducat—the musket which had procured us many a meal—such was the extremity of our distress. We were then able to satisfy our appetites, after having been forty hours without food or sleep and having travelled ten miles in sleet and snow.

The next day, the 6th of March, we rested, and on the 7th came to a village in the forest four miles from Znín. Here we fell in with a gang of gypsies (or rather brigands), who numbered about four hundred men and dragged us to their camp. They were mostly French

and Prussian deserters, and thinking that I was one too wanted me to join them. However, I told my story to their leader, whereupon he presented me with a ducat, gave us a small amount of bread and meat, and allowed us to depart in peace.

On the 10th of March we came to Thorn, where we had another adventure. A fair was being held on the day of our arrival and, not unnaturally, suspicions were aroused by seeing a strong, tall young man, wretchedly clothed, with a large sabre at his side and a pair of pistols in his belt, accompanied by another as poorly dressed as himself, with his hand and neck bound up and armed likewise with pistols. We went to an inn and were refused admittance. I then asked for the Jesuits' college, where I enquired for the principal. They thought at first that I was a thief who had come to seek asylum. After waiting for some time the principal made his appearance. I related all that had happened to us, told him the object of our journey, begged him to save Schell, who was unable to proceed farther, and whose wounds grew daily worse, and prayed him to keep Schell at the college till I should have been to my mother and have obtained money, when I would return to Thorn and repay him whatever expense he had been put to. But scarcely would he listen to my humble

request. "Be brief," said he; "I have more pressing affairs than thine." In short, I was turned away without obtaining the slightest aid.

Mournful and angry, I left the college and went to a lodging house, where I found a Prussian recruiting officer who used all his arts to persuade me to enlist, offering me five rix-dollars and to make me a corporal if I could write. I pretended I was a Livonian who had deserted from the Austrians to return home and claim an inheritance left me by my father. After much persuasion he at length told me in confidence it was well known in the town that I was a robber, that I should shortly be taken before a magistrate, but that if I would enlist he would guarantee my safety.

Such language was new to me; my passion rose immediately; I remembered that my name was Trenck. I struck him in the face and drew my sword, but instead of defending himself he sprang out of the room, telling the landlord not to let me leave the house.

I knew that the town of Thorn had a tacit agreement with the King of Prussia to deliver up deserters, and I now began to fear the consequences of my act. Looking through the window I presently saw two Prussian non-commissioned officers enter the house. Schell and I instantly

flew to our arms and met the Prussians at the door. "Make way," cried I, presenting my pistols. The Prussian soldiers drew their swords but retired overawed. Running out of the house I saw a Prussian lieutenant in the street with the town guard. These I overawed in the same way, and not one of them dared to oppose me, though they all cried, "Stop thief!" I reached the Jesuits' college in safety, but poor Schell was captured and dragged off to prison like a criminal. I was half mad at not being able to rescue him, for I thought it inevitable that he would now be delivered up to the Prussians.

My reception at the college was much better than it had been before, for they no longer doubted that I was really a thief seeking asylum. I addressed myself to one of the fathers who seemed to be a kind sort of man and told him briefly what had happened, entreating him to endeavour to discover why they all wanted to arrest us. He went out and returned in about an hour saying, "Nobody knows you: an important theft was committed yesterday at the fair, and all suspicious persons are being seized. You entered the town dressed like brigands, and the house where you put up is kept by a man employed as a Prussian enlister who has denounced you both as suspicious people. The Prussian lieutenant, therefore, made a

complaint to the magistrates, and it was thought advisable to secure your persons."

My joy at hearing this was great. Our Moravian passport and the journal of our route, which I had in my pocket, would afford complete proof of our innocence. I requested, therefore, that enquiry should be made at the town where we had stopped the night before. Fortunately I was able to persuade the Jesuit that I was speaking the truth, so he went out and presently returned with one of the syndics, to whom I gave a more detailed account of myself. The syndic examined Schell and found that his story agreed with mine, besides which our passport declared who we were. However, I passed that night in the convent without closing my eyes, turning over in my mind all the possibilities that Fate might have in store for us. I was more troubled for Schell than for myself, for he knew not where I was, and was convinced that we should be taken to Berlin, in which event he had determined to put an end to his life.

Happily my doubts were ended at ten o'clock the next morning when the good Jesuit father arrived, followed by my friend Schell. The judges, he said, had found us innocent and declared that we were free to go where we pleased. He added, however, that he advised us to be on our guard, as we were being watched

by the Prussian enlistsers ; the lieutenant also had hoped, by having us committed as thieves, to oblige me to enlist, and he would doubtless relate to his superior officer all that had happened.

I greeted Schell warmly. He had been very ill used when led to prison because he had endeavoured to defend himself with his left hand and follow me. The people had thrown mud at him and called him a rascal, crying that he would soon be hanged. He was hardly, therefore, in a state to travel farther ; all the same it was essential to leave the town at once. The principal of the college sent us a ducat but did not come to see us, and the chief magistrate gave each of us a crown by way of indemnification for false imprisonment. We returned to our lodging, took up our bundles and set out on the road once more.

As we passed through the town, I reflected that on the road to Elbing we should have to pass through several Prussian villages, so I enquired for a shop where we might purchase a map. We were directed to an old woman who sat at a door across the way and were told that she had a good assortment, for her son was a scholar. I went up to her and told her that we were unfortunate travellers who wanted a map which would show us the road to Russia. She showed us into a room, laid an atlas on the

table and stood opposite me while I examined the map, endeavouring to hide a bit of a ragged ruffle that had made its appearance. After looking at me steadfastly for some moments she exclaimed in a sad and mournful tone :

“ Good God ! who knows what has now become of my poor son ? I can see, sir, that you are of good birth. My son would insist upon going to seek his fortune, and for these eight years I have had no news of him. When last I heard of him he was in the Austrian cavalry.”

I asked what was his regiment.

“ The regiment of Hohenhem ; you are his very picture.”

“ Is he not about my height ? ”

“ Yes, just about.”

“ Has he got light hair ? ”

“ Yes, like yours, sir.”

“ What is his name ? ”

“ Wilhelm.”

“ Rejoice, my dear mother ! ” cried I. “ Wilhelm is still alive, he was my best friend when I was with the regiment.”

The poor woman could not restrain her joy at this. She threw her arms round my neck, called me her good angel to bring her such happy tidings, and asked me a thousand questions—which I easily contrived to make her answer herself. And thus, forced by imperious

necessity, bereft of all other means, did I act the part of deceiver.

The story I made up was, roughly, as follows:

I told the old woman that I was a soldier in the regiment of Hohenhem, that I had furlough to go and see my father, and that I should return in a month's time when I would take with me a letter from her to her son, and would undertake that, if she wished it, her son should purchase his discharge and come home. I added that I should be for ever obliged to her if, in the meantime, she would allow my comrade to live in her house, he being wounded by the Prussian recruiters and unable to continue his journey; also I would send him money to enable him to rejoin me or would come back myself and fetch him and would thankfully pay for every expense she had been put to. The old woman joyfully consented and told me that her second husband had driven her dear Wilhelm from home in order that he might bequeath everything they possessed to the younger son. She said it would be better, therefore, that Schell should live at the house of a friend, so that her husband might know nothing about the matter. Then, not satisfied with this kindness, she made us partake of her dinner, gave me a new shirt, stockings, sufficient provisions for three days, and six Lunenburg florins. I left Thorn and my faithful Schell

the same night, consoled with the thought that he would be well taken care of.

At Mewe, on the 15th of March, I slept in some straw among a number of carters, and when I awoke found that they had taken my pistols and what little money I had left. What could I do? Possibly the innkeeper was party to the theft. My reckoning amounted to eighteen Polish groschen. The surly landlord pretended to believe that I had had no money when I entered his house, and I was obliged to give him the only spare shirt I had, with a silk handkerchief, which the good woman at Thorn had presented me with, and to depart without a penny in my pocket.

I set off for Marienburg, but it was impossible to reach this place without falling into the hands of the Prussians unless I crossed the Vistula, and unfortunately I had no money to pay the ferry. Full of anxiety, not knowing how to act, I saw two fishermen in a boat, so I went up to them, drew my sabre and compelled them to land me on the other side; whereupon I took the oars from them, jumped out of the boat, pushed it off from the bank and left it to drive with the stream.

To what dangers does not poverty expose man! The two Polish schellings which the ferry would have cost me were not worth more than a halfpenny, yet was I driven by necessity to

. commit violence on two poor men who, had they been as desperate in their defence as I was obliged to be in my attack, must inevitably have lost their lives. Had I cut them down with my sabre I should surely have been a murderer; but I should likewise have been one of the most innocent of murderers. Thus we see that the value of money is not to be estimated by any specific sum, small or great, but according to its necessity and use.

On the 17th of March I came to Elbing, and here I met with my former tutor Brodowsky, who had become a captain and paymaster in the Polish regiment at Golz. He met me just as I entered the town. I followed triumphantly to his lodgings, and here at length ended the painful, long and adventurous journey I had been obliged to perform.

This good friend, after providing me with immediate necessities, wrote so affectionately to my mother that she came to Elbing within a week and gave me every aid of which I stood in need. She also found a sure mode of conveying a letter to my dear mistress at Berlin who, a short time afterwards, sent me a bill of exchange upon Dantzic for four hundred ducats. To this my mother added a thousand rix-dollars and a diamond cross worth nearly half as much. She remained with me for a fortnight and persisted, in spite of all my remonstrances,

in advising me to go to Vienna. I had determined to go to Petersburg ; all my fears were awakened at the thought of Vienna ; yet she would not yield in opinion and promised her future assistance only if I obeyed her. It was my duty not to remain obstinate in the face of her wishes ; accordingly I yielded and promised that the next road I took should be the one to Vienna. Shortly afterwards she left me, and I never saw her again. She died in 1751.

Having once more assumed my proper name and character, I was eager to return to Thorn. Great was my joy at meeting Schell again. The old woman had treated him like a mother. She was surprised and a little frightened at seeing me enter in an officer's uniform and accompanied by two servants. I gratefully and rapturously kissed her hand, repaid with thankfulness every expense that she had been put to (for Schell had been nursed with truly maternal kindness), told her who I was, acknowledged the trick I had played upon her concerning her son, and promised faithfully to give a true and not fictitious account of him as soon as ever I arrived at Vienna. Schell was ready in three days, and we left Thorn and took the road to Vienna by way of Warsaw and Cracow.

Here then ends the first volume of my journal in which, from the hardships therein related and

- numerous others omitted, I seem to have been a kind of second Robinson Crusoe and to have undergone some preparation for the load of affliction which I was afterwards destined to bear. I reached Vienna in April 1747.

And now another act of the tragedy begins.

CHAPTER V

AFTER having defrayed the expenses of traveling, I divided the three hundred ducats which remained with Schell, who, after staying a month at Vienna, went to join Pallavicini's regiment, in which he had obtained a lieutenant-colonel's commission and which was then in Italy. I now discovered that my cousin, Baron Francis Trenck, the famous colonel of pandours, was imprisoned at the arsenal and involved in a most perplexing prosecution. This Trenck was my father's brother's son. His father had been colonel and governor of Leitschau, and had possessed considerable lordships in Sclavonia, among others those of Pleternitz, Prestowacz and Pakratz. After the siege of Vienna in 1683 he had left the Prussian service for that of Austria, in which he remained for sixty years.

Scarcely had I arrived in Vienna before his confidential agent, M. Leber, presented me to Prince Charles and the Emperor, both of whom were well acquainted with the services of Trenck and the malice of his enemies. Permission, therefore, was readily granted to me

to visit him in his prison and to procure him such assistance as he might need. At my second audience the Emperor spoke so highly of my persecuted cousin that I became very interested in him ; his Highness commanded me to have recourse to him on all occasions and, moreover, owned that the President of the War Council was a man of very bad character and a declared enemy of Trenck. This President was the Count of Lowenwalde. My cousin's suit, which was even then being revised, soon took on a different appearance ; the good Empress, who had been deceived, was soon informed of the rights of the matter, and Trenck's innocence appeared evident. The original sentence was quashed, and sixteen of Trenck's officers, most of whom had been broken for different offences, were proved to have perjured themselves in order to bring about his ruin. The Empress gave Trenck to understand that she required him to ask her pardon, and that if he did this all proceedings would be stopped and he himself set at liberty. Prince Charles, who knew the Court of Vienna, advised me to persuade my cousin to comply. But nothing could shake Trenck's resolution. Convinced of his innocence, he demanded strict justice, and this, unfortunately, made his ultimate ruin more swift.

I soon found that he must fall a sacrifice to

Court intrigue ; he was rich, and his enemies had already divided among themselves more than eighty thousand florins of his property, which was impounded and in their hands. They had treated him cruelly, and knew him too well not to dread his vengeance the moment he should recover his freedom. Accordingly, every wily art was put in practice to ensure his destruction.

I, therefore, made him the brotherly proposition of escaping, in order that he might obtain his liberty and prove his innocence to the Empress. I told him my plan, and he decided to follow it.

A few days later I was ordered to wait on Field-Marshal Count Königseck, Governor of Vienna. This admirable old man, whose memory I shall ever revere, advised me to abandon my cousin, and gave me clearly to understand that Trenck had betrayed me by having revealed my proposed plan of escape, being willing to sacrifice me to his ambition in order to justify the purity of his intentions to the Court and show that instead of wishing to escape he only desired justice. Confounded at the cowardly action of one for whom I would willingly have sacrificed my life, I resolved to leave him to his fate, and thought it was extremely fortunate for me that the worthy field-marshal had smothered all further enquiry into

the matter. I related this black trait of ingratitude to Prince Charles of Lorraine, who prevailed upon me to see my cousin again without letting him know that I knew what had passed. Before I proceed, however, I will here give the reader an account of this Trenck.

He was a man of talent and unbounded ambition ; devoted, even fanatically, to his sovereign ; his boldness approached temerity ; he was artful, wicked, vindictive and unfeeling. His cupidity equalled the utmost excesses of avarice, even in his thirty-third year, when he died. He was too proud to receive favours or obligations from any man, and was capable of getting rid of his best friend if he thought he had any claims on his gratitude or could get possession of his fortune.

He knew that I had rendered him very important services, and supposed his cause already won ; for I had bribed the judges who had revised his sentence with thirty thousand florins, which money I received from his friend Baron Lopreski and conveyed to these honest councillors. I knew all his secrets, and nothing was lacking to prompt his black heart to seek my destruction. Scarcely had a fortnight elapsed after he had betrayed me when the following remarkable event happened.

I left him late one evening, taking under my coat a bag of papers and documents relating

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to the prosecution which I had been examining for him and transcribing. There were at this time about five and twenty officers in Vienna who had laid complaints against him ; and as I had laboured incessantly in his defence, naturally they considered me their greatest enemy. I was therefore obliged to be on my guard at all times. A report had been spread through Vienna that I was secretly sent by the King of Prussia to set my cousin free ; he, however, constantly denied to the hour of his death that he had ever written to me at Berlin ; hence it follows that the letter I received had been forged by Jaschinsky.

Leaving the arsenal, I was crossing the courtyard when I perceived that I was being closely followed by two men in grey overcoats who, pressing close on my heels, began to talk loudly about " the runaway Prussian, Trenck." I saw that they sought a quarrel with me, which was a thing of no great difficulty at that moment ; for a man is never more disposed to duelling than when he has nothing to lose and is discontented with his lot. I suppose they were two of the officers broken by Trenck, who were now retaliating by becoming his accusers, and I endeavoured to avoid them and gain my lodging. Scarcely, however, had I turned down the street that led thither before they quickened their pace and came up with me. I turned

round, and in a moment received a sword-thrust in the left side, where I was holding my bag of papers. This accident alone saved my life, for the sword pierced the papers and grazed the skin. I instantly drew, but the heroes ran. I pursued, and one of them tripped up and fell. I caught hold of him, and was about to show him that I at least was no bungler, when the guard came up. My captive declared that he was an officer in the Regiment of Kollowrat, and opened his overcoat and displayed his uniform; whereupon he was released by the guard and I was taken to prison in his stead. Next morning the Town Major came and informed me that I had intentionally sought a quarrel with two officers—Lieutenants F——g and K——n. I was alone, and could produce no witnesses; it was two to one against. I was compelled, therefore, to remain in prison for six days.

No sooner was I released than these good friends sent to demand satisfaction for the said pretended insult. I accepted the proposal, and promised to be at the Scotch gate—the place appointed by them—in an hour's time. I recognised their names as those of two famous swashbucklers who were in the habit of fencing daily at the arsenal, where they often visited Trenck. I went to my cousin to ask his assistance, told him what had happened, and, as the

consequences of the duel might be serious, requested him to give me a hundred ducats so that I might be able to fly if I killed either or both of them.

Hitherto I had been spending my own money in aiding Trenck, and had never asked him for any repayment; what was my astonishment, therefore, when he said to me with a sneer, "Since, my good fellow, you have got into a quarrel without consulting me, you will have to get out of it without my assistance!" As I went out he called me back. "I will pay for your undertaker," said he. He at all events had made up his mind that I should never return alive from the encounter!

I went in despair to Baron Lopreski, who kindly gave me fifty ducats and a pair of pistols. Thus provided, I cheerfully repaired to the field of battle. Here I found half a dozen officers of the garrison. As I had few acquaintances in Vienna, I had no second; fortunately, however, an old Spanish invalid captain named Pereira happened to come up, and having learnt what was going on, said that he at all events would not leave me.

Lieutenant K——n was the first with whom I fought. He received satisfaction by a deep wound in the right arm. At this I desired the seconds to take away his sword, lest he should get hurt any further. Lieutenant F——g next

entered the lists, with threats—which were soon quieted by a lunge in the belly. Here-upon Lieutenant M——f, who was second to the first wounded man, said to me angrily: “Had I been your man you would have had a very different reception.” At this my old Spaniard (who was eighty if he was a day) proudly advanced, his long whiskers and tottering frame cutting a not incurious figure, and cried: “Hold! Trenck has proved himself a brave man, and if anyone thinks proper to assault him further he must first take a breather with me.” Everybody laughed at this, coming from a man who could scarcely stand upright, much less hold a sword. I replied: “My friend, I am safe, unhurt, and do not want any assistance; should I be disabled, then, if you think proper, you may take my place; but as long as I can hold a sword I shall have pleasure in satisfying these gentlemen one after another.” I would have rested a moment, but the haughty M——f, enraged at the defeat of his friend, would not allow me to, but attacked me furiously. Having wounded him twice, in the hand and the groin, he tried to close and throw me, but I disarmed and threw him.

None of the others had any desire to renew the combat. My three enemies were sent bleeding back to the town, and as M——f appeared to be mortally wounded I fled to the

Jesuits' College. As, however, neither the Jesuits nor the Capuchins would afford me an asylum, I was obliged to flee to the Convent of Keltenberg. From there I wrote to Baron Lopreski, who came to see me. I told him all that had happened, and by his good offices was able to appear in the streets of Vienna again a week later.

Lieutenant F——g being in a bad state of health, and his wound, though not in itself dangerous, making it doubtful whether he would recover, sent to beg me to visit him. I went, and having first entreated me to pardon him, he warned me to beware of my cousin. I learnt afterwards that the treacherous Trenck had promised him a company and a thousand ducats if he would pick a quarrel with me and kill me. He was deeply in debt, so he accepted and sought the assistance of Lieutenant K——n, and had not the bundle of papers luckily saved me, I should undoubtedly have been killed by his first lunge. To clear themselves of the infamy of such an act, these two worthy gentlemen pretended that I had assaulted them in the street.

I resolved not to see my ungrateful kinsman any more. Notwithstanding all his great qualities, his most marked characteristic certainly was that of sacrificing everything to attain his private ends. His covetousness was

so great that even at his time of life, though his fortune amounted to a million and a half, he did not spend more than thirty kreutzers a day.

No sooner was it known that I had abandoned Trenck than General Count Lowenwalde, his most relentless enemy and President of the first council by which he had been condemned, summoned me to his presence, promised me every sort of good fortune and protection if I would tell him the means that had been secretly employed in the revision of the trial, and went so far as to offer me four thousand florins if I would assist the prosecution against my cousin. I rejected the proposal with disdain, and determined rather to seek my fortune in the East Indies than remain in a country where, under the best of Queens, the most loyal of subjects and best of soldiers could be ruined by corrupt courtiers and judges.

In short, I resolved to leave Vienna. Prince Charles endeavoured to persuade me not to, and at last gave me a letter of recommendation to General Brown, who was then commanding the Imperial forces in Italy. But I was anxious to go to India. Accordingly I left Vienna in August 1748 and took the road for Holland. Meanwhile, the enemies of Trenck found that there was now no opposition to their iniquitous proceedings and soon obtained a sentence of

imprisonment for him in the Spielberg, where too late he repented having betrayed his faithful adviser and kinsman. Yet to his last moment he lost no opportunity of evincing his hatred towards me, and even in his grave strove, by his will, to involve me in misfortune, as will hereafter be seen.

I fled, then, from Vienna—would to God it had been for ever ; but Fate brought me back where Providence thought proper I should become a vessel of wrath and persecution ; I was to enact my part in Europe and not in Asia.

At Nuremberg I met a body of Russians commanded by General Lieuwen, a relative of my mother, who were marching to the Netherlands. Major Buschkow, whom I had known when Russian Resident at Vienna, prevailed upon me to visit him and presented me to the general. I pleased him, and may say with truth that he behaved to me like a friend and a father. He advised me to enter the Russian service, and gave me a company of dragoons in the Tobolsk Regiment on condition that I would not leave him but would serve on his staff. His confidence in, and esteem for, me were unbounded.

Peace followed ; the army returned to Moravia without firing a musket, and headquarters were fixed at Prosnitz. General

Lieuwen now sent me to Cracow, to conduct one hundred and forty sick men thence by way of the Vistula to Dantzic, where there were Russian vessels ready to embark and transport them to Riga.

At Dantzic a remarkable event happened which I, with good reason, shall ever remember.

I became acquainted with a Prussian officer (whose name I withhold out of respect for his family), who visited me daily and we often rode out together in the neighbourhood of Dantzic. My servant got to know his, and my astonishment was indeed great when he said to me one day: "Beware, sir, of a trap that is being laid for you by Lieutenant N——; he is going to entice you out of the town and deliver you up to the Prussians." I asked him where he had heard this. "From his servant, sir," answered he; "I am very friendly with him, and he does not want me to be taken too."

With the aid of a couple of ducats I soon learnt the entire plot. It appears that the lieutenant had agreed with the Prussian Resident, Reimer, to entice me into the suburb of Langfuhr, where there was an inn which stood on Prussian territory. Here eight recruiting non-commissioned officers were to wait concealed, seize me the moment I entered the house, hurry me into a carriage, and drive off

to Lauenberg in Pomerania. Two non-commissioned officers were to escort me on horseback as far as the frontier, and the remainder were to hold me and prevent me from calling for help so long as we should remain on Dantzic territory. I learnt further that my enemies were to be armed only with sabres, and that they were to wait behind the door. The two sergeants, on horseback, were to secure my servant and prevent him from riding off to raise the alarm.

I might easily have rendered these preparations ineffectual by refusing to accept the lieutenant's proposal ; but vanity gave me other advice, and resentment made me desirous of revenging myself for such detestable treachery.

Lieutenant N—— came about noon to dine with me as usual. He was more thoughtful and serious than I had ever known him before, and he left me at four o'clock, after having made me promise to ride with him early next morning as far as Langfuhr. I noticed that my consent gave him great pleasure.

The moment he had left me I went to the Russian Resident, M. Scheerer, an honest Swiss, told him the whole conspiracy, and asked him if I could take six of the men under my command for my own personal defence. I told him my plan, to which he was at first opposed ; but seeing me obstinate, he answered at last,

“Do as you please, only I mustn’t know anything about the matter, nor will I be responsible for what happens.” I immediately went to my soldiers, selected six men and took them, while it was dark, into a field opposite the Prussian inn. Here I bade them lie concealed in the corn, but ordered them to run to my assistance with their muskets at the first shot they should hear, and to seize all whom they could, but to fire only in case of resistance. Notwithstanding all these precautions, I thought it as well to prevent surprise by finding out what the exact plans of my enemies were, lest my information should have been false in any detail. I learnt from my spies that at four in the morning the Prussian Resident Reimer had left the city with post-horses. Accordingly I loaded my pocket pistols, sharpened my Turkish sabre, and in gratitude to the lieutenant’s servant promised to take him into my service, for I was convinced of his honesty.

About six o’clock in the morning the lieutenant cheerfully entered my room, expatiated on the fineness of the weather, and told me jovially that I should be very kindly received by the handsome landlady of Langfuhr. I was soon ready; we mounted, and left the town attended by our servants. Some three hundred paces from the inn my worthy friend

proposed that we should dismount and let our servants lead the horses, so that we could enjoy the beauty of the morning. I agreed, and as I dismounted I observed his treacherous eyes sparkle with delight.

The Resident, Reimer, was at the window of the inn, and as soon as he saw me he called out, "Good morning, captain, good morning. Come in ; your breakfast is waiting." I smiled, and told him that I had not time for breakfast at present. So saying, I continued my walk and would have passed the inn, but my companion took me by the arm and absolutely forced me to enter ; on which, losing all patience, I gave him a blow that almost knocked him down and ran to my horse as if I meant to fly. The Prussians instantly rushed from behind the door to attack me. I fired at the first, and my Russians sprang from their hiding-place, presenting their muskets and crying, "Stuy, stuy, yebionnamat." The terror of the poor Prussians may be imagined. They all took to their heels immediately. I took care to make sure of my lieutenant, and ran to seize the Resident, but he escaped out of the back door with the loss of only his white periwig. The Russians took four prisoners, and I ordered them to bestow fifty strokes upon each of them in the open street. An ensign named Casseburg, who told me his name

and said that he had been my brother's school-fellow, begged for mercy, on the ground that he had acted under the orders of his superiors. I admitted his excuse and allowed him to go. I then drew my sword and told the lieutenant to defend himself. But he was so frightened that after drawing his sword he begged my pardon and laid the whole blame upon the Resident. He really had not the power to put himself on guard. I twice jerked his sword out of his hand with mine, and at last, taking the Russian corporal's cane, I thrashed him till I was exhausted, he not offering the slightest resistance. Such is the meanness of detected treachery. "Go, rascal," I cried, "and tell your comrades how Trenck punishes highway robbers." I left him kneeling in the road.

Collecting my Russians, we marched off victoriously, proceeded to the harbour, embarked, and three or four days later set sail for Riga. It is remarkable that none of the newspapers took any notice of this affair and no satisfaction was demanded. The Prussians, no doubt, were ashamed of being defeated in so perfidious an attempt. I have since learned that Frederick, no doubt by the false representations of Reimer, was furious at this affair, with the result that he pursued me through every corner of Europe, till at last I fell into his power and suffered a martyrdom

both unmerited and unexampled. The Prussian Envoy, Goltz, indeed made a complaint to Count Bestuzhev,¹ but received no satisfaction. My conduct was justified in Russia, for I had defended myself against assassins as a Russian captain ought. Some readers may blame me for not having avoided this rencontre and demanded personal satisfaction of Lieutenant N——. But throughout life I have sought rather than avoided danger. My vanity and revenge were both aroused. I was everywhere persecuted by the Prussians, and was, therefore, determined to show that, so far from fearing them, I was quite capable of looking after myself. I hired the lieutenant's servant, whom I found honest and faithful and whom I comfortably settled in marriage at Vienna in 1753. After my ten years' imprisonment I found him in poor circumstances, and again took him into my service, in which he died in 1779.

General Lieuwen had marched from Moravia for Russia with the army, and was then at Riga. I went to pay him my respects. He received me kindly, and took me to one of his seats named Annaburg, four miles from Riga. Here I remained for some days, and he gave me many letters of introduction to Moscow, where

¹ Alexius Petrovich, Count Bestuzhev-Ryumin, 1693-1768, Grand Chancellor of Russia. For an account of him see *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th Ed., vol. iii., p. 824.

the Court then was. He advised me to endeavour to obtain a company in the cuirassiers, the captains of which then ranked as majors, and to throw up my commission in the Siberian regiment of Tobolski dragoons. Accordingly I left Riga in company with M. Oettinger, a lieutenant-colonel in the engineers, and Lieutenant Weissmann, for Moscow. This was the same Weissmann who rendered so many important services to Russia during the last war with the Turks.

On my arrival, after delivering my letters of introduction I was most kindly received by Count Bestuzhev. Oettinger, with whom I had become friends, was exceedingly intimate with the Chancellor, and my prospects began to look rosy indeed.

CHAPTER VI

I HAD not been long at Moscow before I met Count Hamilton, my former friend during my residence at Vienna. He was a captain in the cavalry, in General Bernes's regiment, who had been sent as Imperial Ambassador to Russia.

Bernes had been Ambassador at Berlin in 1743, where he had consequently known me during the height of my favour at the Court of Frederick. Hamilton presented me to him, and I had the good fortune to gain his friendship to such an extent that after a few visits he endeavoured to detach me from the Russian service, offering me the strongest recommendations at Vienna and a company in his own regiment. My cousin's misfortunes, however, had left too deep an impression on my mind for me to follow his advice. The Indies would have been preferable to Austria.

Bernes invited me to dine with him in order to meet his bosom friend Lord Hyndford,¹ the English Ambassador. This eminent statesman had known me at Berlin, and was present when Frederick had honoured me by

¹ John Carmichael, 3rd Earl of Hyndford, *b.* 1701, *d.* 1767. Envoy to Prussia, 1741-2, to Russia, 1744-9, to Vienna, 1752-64.

saying, "*C'est un matador de ma jeunesse.*" He was well versed in men, conceived a good opinion of my abilities, and became a friend and father to me. He seated me by his side at table and asked me, "Why came you here, Trenck?" "In search of bread and honour, my lord," answered I, "having undeservedly lost them both in my own country." He enquired into the state of my finances; I told him that my total wealth was not above thirty ducats.

"Take my advice," said he; "you have the necessary qualifications to succeed in Russia; but the people here despise poverty, judge from external appearances only, and do not include services or talents in the estimate; it is essential that you should have the appearance of being wealthy. Bernes and I will introduce you into the best families and will supply you with the necessary means of support. Splendid liveries, led horses, diamond rings, deep play, a bold front, undaunted freedom with statesmen and gallantry among the ladies, are the means by which foreigners must make their way in this country. Avail yourself of them, and leave the rest to us." Bernes then entered, and they determined, mutually, to contribute towards my promotion.

Few young men who seek their fortune in foreign countries are so lucky. Fortune for

a moment seemed willing to recompense me for my past sufferings and again to raise me to the height from which I had fallen. These Ambassadors, met here by accident, had been witnesses of my prosperity when at Berlin. The talents I possessed and the favour I then enjoyed attracted the notice of all the foreign Ministers. They were bosom friends, equally well read in the human heart, and equally benevolent and noble-minded ; their recommendation at Court was decisive, the nations they represented were in alliance with Russia, and the confidence Bestuzhev placed in them was unbounded.

I was now introduced not as a foreigner who came to seek employment, but as the heir of the house of Trenck, with its rich Hungarian possessions, and as the former favourite of the Prussian monarch. I was also admitted to the society of the most eminent *littérateurs* of the day, and wrote a poem on the anniversary of the coronation of the Empress Elizabeth. Hyndford took care she should see it, and in conjunction with the chancellor presented me to the sovereign. My reception was most gracious ; she herself recommended me to the Chancellor and presented me with a gold-hilted sword worth a thousand roubles. This raised me highly in the esteem of all those of the Bestuzhev party.

Manners at that time were so rude in Russia that every foreigner who gave a dinner or a ball was obliged to give notice of it to the Chancellor Bestuzhev, with a list of the guests to be invited. Faction governed everything ; wherever Bestuzhev was, no friend of Woronzow durst appear. I was intimate with the Austrian and English Ambassadors, consequently was esteemed by all parties. I soon became the favourite of the Chancellor's lady, as I shall hereafter notice ; and nothing more was wanting to obtain all that I could wish.

Scarcely had I been six weeks at Moscow before I had an adventure which I shall here relate ; for, myself excepted, all the persons concerned in it are now dead. Intrigues properly belong to novels ; this book is intended for a more serious purpose, and they are, therefore, here usually suppressed. But I trust I shall be pardoned for relating an incident which was both interesting and honourable.

It must not be supposed that I was a woman-hater. Most of the good or bad fortune I had experienced originated in love. I was not by nature inconstant and was incapable of deceit, even in amours. In the very ardour of youth I always shunned mere sensual pleasures. I loved for more exalted reasons, and for such sought to be beloved again. The most difficult of access, the noblest and the fairest, were ever

my choice, and my veneration for these always deterred me from grosser gratifications. My adventures with women would amply furnish a romance. But enough of this ; I should not relate the present one were it not necessary to my story.

Dining one day with Lord Hyndford, I was seated beside a charming young lady of one of the best families in Russia, who had been promised in marriage, though only seventeen, to an old invalid Minister. Her eyes soon told me that she thought me preferable to her intended bridegroom. I understood them, lamented her sad fate, and was surprised to hear her exclaim, " Oh, heavens ! that it were possible you could deliver me from my misfortune ; I would promise to do whatever you wish ! "

The impression such an appeal must make on a man of four and twenty with a temperament like mine may easily be imagined. The lady was ravishingly beautiful ; her soul was candour itself, and her rank that of a princess ; but the Court commands had already been given in favour of the marriage, and flight, with all its inseparable dangers, was the only expedient. A public table was no place for long explanations. Our hearts were already one. I requested an interview, and the next day we met in the Trotzer Garden, where I passed three

rapturous hours in her company—thanks to her woman, who was a Georgian.

To escape, however, from Moscow was impossible. The distance thence to any foreign country was too great. The Court was not to remove to Petersburg till the next spring, and her marriage was fixed for the first of August. The misfortune was not to be remedied, and nothing was left us but patience. We could only resolve to fly from Petersburg, when there, as soon as possible, and to take refuge in some corner of the earth where we were unknown. The marriage, therefore, was celebrated with pomp, though I, despite of forms, was the true husband of the princess. The state of the husband imposed upon her was such that it were impossible to describe it without causing disgust.

The princess gave me her jewels and several thousand roubles which she had received as a wedding present, that I might purchase everything necessary for flight. My evil destiny, however, decided otherwise. I was playing at ombre with her one night at the house of the Countess Bestuzhev when she complained of a violent headache. As I saw her to her carriage, we arranged to meet on the morrow in the Trotzer Garden. She clasped my hand with inexpressible emotion, and departed. Alas, I never beheld her more till stretched upon the

bier ! She grew delirious that very night, and so continued to her death, which happened on the sixth day, when the dread signs of smallpox began to appear. During her delirium she revealed our love, and incessantly called upon me to deliver her from her tyrant. Thus in the flower of her age perished one of the most lovely women I ever knew, and with her fled all that I held most dear.

Lord Hyndford alone was in the secret, for I had no secrets from him ; he encouraged me in my amour, and owned that for such a mistress he himself might perhaps have been weak enough to have acted as I had done. Almost as much moved as myself, he sympathised with me as a friend, and his advice deterred me from ending my miseries and descending with her whom I had loved and lost into the grave. This was the severest trial I had ever felt. Our affection was unbounded, and such as only noble hearts can feel. My love for this lady became well known in Moscow, yet her corpulent husband had not sufficient intelligence to suppose that there was any meaning in the words spoken during her delirium. Her gifts to me amounted in value to about seven thousand ducats. Lord Hyndford and Count Bernes both adjudged them legally mine, and well am I assured that her heart had bequeathed me much more.

To this event succeeded another, by which my fortune was greatly influenced. The Countess Bestuzhev was at that time the most amiable and witty woman at Court. Her husband, cunning, selfish and shallow, was Minister in name only, for it was she who in reality governed—and with a genius that was at once daring and comprehensive. The too pliant Elizabeth carelessly left the most important affairs of State to the direction of others ; thus the countess was almost the ruler of the empire, and on her the attention of the foreign Ministers was fixed. Haughty and majestic in her demeanour, she was supposed to be the only woman at Court who was faithful to her husband ; which supposition probably originated from her superior education, she being a German born ; for I afterwards found that her virtue was only pride and a knowledge of the national character. The Russian lover rules despotic over his mistress ; he requires money and submission ; and should he meet with opposition he threatens her with blows and the discovery of her secret. Her carriage towards the Russians was lofty, cautious and ironical rather than kind. To me she showed the greatest kindness on all occasions, welcomed me at her table, and often admitted me to drink coffee in company with herself and Colonel Oettinger. She never failed giving me to understand that

she had perceived my love for the Princess N——; and though I always denied the fact, she related circumstances which she could have known (as I thought) only from my mistress herself. My taciturnity pleased her, for the Russians never fail to boast of their good fortune when they have made a conquest. She tried to persuade me that she had watched us together when we were in company, had read the language of our eyes and had discovered our secret long ago. I was ignorant at that time that my mistress's maid was, and had been for some time, in her pay as a spy.

About a week after the death of the princess the countess invited me to take coffee with her. She lamented my loss and the violence of a passion which had deprived me of my customary vivacity. She seemed so interested in my behalf, and expressed so many wishes, and such ardent ones, to better my fortune, that I could no longer be in doubt as to her intentions. Another opportunity soon occurred which confirmed my belief—she confessed her love for me. Discretion, secrecy and fidelity were the conditions she imposed; and never did I experience a more ardent passion from a woman.

My captaincy in the cavalry was now no longer thought of; I was destined for political employment. My first intention was to be a Gentleman of the Chamber, which in Russia

is an office of importance, and my prospects became quite resplendent. Lord Hyndford, ever the depository of my secrets, counselled me, told me how to conduct myself, rejoiced at my success, and refused to be reimbursed for the expense he had been put to, although my circumstances were now so prosperous. The credit I enjoyed was soon noticed ; foreign Ministers began to pay their court to me ; Goltz, the Prussian Minister, made every effort to win me over, but found me incorruptible. Alliance with Russia was at this time eagerly sought by foreign powers ; the humbling of Prussia was generally desired and planned ; and nobody was better informed than myself as to the ministerial and family factions at that Court.

A year after my acquaintance with her, my mistress fell into her enemies' power, and with her husband was delivered over to the executioner. In 1756 the Chancellor Bestuzhev was forced to confession by the knout. Apraxim, the Minister for War, had a similar fate. The wife of his brother, then Envoy to Poland, with three others of the first ladies of the Court, were, by the treachery of a certain lieutenant, Berger, knouted, branded and had their tongues cut out. This happened in 1741, when Elizabeth ascended the throne. Her husband, however, served his country faithfully ;

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I knew him as Russian Envoy at Vienna in 1751.

No man in so short a space of time had greater opportunities than I to discover the secrets of State, especially when guided by Hyndford and Bernes, under the reign of a well-meaning but short-sighted empress whose first Minister was a weak man, directed by the will of an able and ambitious wife who loved me, a stranger, an acquaintance of only a few months, so passionately that she would have sacrificed every other object to this passion. In such a situation I might have amassed treasures and deposited them in full security. Her generosity was boundless, and although obliged to pay more than a hundred thousand roubles in one year to discharge her son's debts, yet might I have saved a still larger sum ; but half of the gifts she obliged me to take I lent to this son and lost. So far was I from selfish, and so negligent of wealth, that by supplying the wants of others I often suffered want myself.

My success in Russia displeased the great Frederick, whose persecution attended me everywhere, and he laid his plans accordingly.

One day Lord Hyndford desired me to make him a fair copy of a plan of Kronstadt, for which he furnished the materials, with three additional drawings of the various ships in the

harbour and their names. There was neither danger nor suspicion attending this ; the plan of Kronstadt was no secret, and was sold publicly in the shops of Petersburg. England was likewise at that time in the closest alliance with Russia. Hyndford showed the drawing to Funk, the Saxon Envoy, his intimate friend, who asked his permission to copy it himself. Hyndford gave him the plan signed with my name, and after Funk had been some days employed in copying it, the Prussian Minister, Goltz, who lived in his neighbourhood came in, as he frequently paid him friendly visits. Funk unsuspectingly showed him my drawing, and both lamented the fact that Frederick had lost so useful a subject. Goltz asked if he might borrow it for a couple of days in order to correct his own ; and Funk, one of the worthiest, most honest and least suspicious of men, who loved me like a brother, accordingly lent him the plan.

No sooner was Goltz in possession of it than he hurried to the Chancellor and told him that he had come to prove that a man who had once been unfaithful to the King and country where he had been loaded with favours, would certainly betray, for his own private interests, every country that trusted him. He prefaced his remarks by speaking of the rapid progress I had made in Russia, and the free entrance I

had to the Chancellor's house, where I was received as a son and initiated into the secrets of the Cabinet.

The Chancellor defended me. Goltz then endeavoured to incite his jealousy and told him that my private interviews with his wife were the talk of the town. This he had learnt from his spies, for he had resolved to leave no stone unturned to secure my destruction. He then took my plan of Kronstadt from his pocket and said, "Your Excellency is nourishing a serpent in his bosom. I have received this drawing from Trenck, copied from your own secret plans, for two hundred ducats." He knew that I was employed there sometimes with Oettinger, whose office it was to inspect the buildings and repairs of the Russian fortifications.

Bestuzhev was astounded ; his anger became violent, and Goltz added fuel to the flames by insinuating that I should not be so powerfully protected by Bernes, the Austrian Ambassador, were it not for the benefit of his own Court. Bestuzhev mentioned prosecution and the knout ; Goltz replied that my friends were too powerful, that my pardon would be procured and the evil increased. They determined, therefore, to have me secretly secured, and conveyed privately to Siberia.

Thus, while I unsuspectingly dreamt of

nothing but happiness, the gathering storm threatened destruction. It was averted only by accident—or God's good providence.

Goltz had scarcely left the house when the Chancellor entered his wife's apartment, reproached her with her conduct towards me, and, as she endeavoured to soothe him, told her all that had passed. Her perception was much deeper than her husband's; she saw at once that there was a plot against me; indeed, she knew my heart better than anyone else, and particularly that I was not in want of a paltry two hundred ducats. She was unable, however, to appease him, and it was decided to arrest me. She, therefore, instantly wrote me as follows :

DEAR FRIEND,—You are threatened by a very imminent danger. Do not sleep at home to-night, but go to Lord Hyndford's and stay there until you hear further from me.

One of the secretaries, who was in her confidence, was despatched with the note. He found me after dinner at the British Ambassador's and called me aside. I read the billet and showed it to Lord Hyndford, who advised me to remain in his house for the present. About midnight I heard that the Lieutenant of Police had visited and searched my house.

About ten o'clock in the morning Lord

Hyndford paid a visit to the Chancellor, who immediately reproached him with affording asylum to a traitor.

“What has this traitor done?” said Hyndford.

“Surreptitiously copied a plan of Kronstadt from my secret drawings, which he has sold to the Prussian Minister for two hundred ducats,” replied the Chancellor.

Hyndford was astonished; he knew me well, and also knew that he had then more than eight thousand ducats of mine in money and jewels in his own hands; nor was he less ignorant of the value I set upon money or of the sources whence I could obtain it when I pleased.

“Has your Excellency actually seen this drawing of Trenck’s?”

“Yes, I have been shown it by Goltz.”

“May I also be permitted to see it? I know Trenck’s drawing, and will answer for it that he is no traitor. There is some mystery here; be so kind as to desire M. Goltz to come and bring his plan of Kronstadt with him. Trenck is at my house now, and shall be forthcoming instantly; you need not fear that I shall try to protect him if he proves guilty.”

The Chancellor wrote to Goltz, but he, artful as a fox, had no doubt taken care to be informed that the Lieutenant of Police had missed his

prey. He therefore sent an excuse and did not appear.

As soon as he returned to the Embassy, Hyndford addressed me as follows :

“Trenck, are you a traitor? If so, you do not deserve my protection, but stand here as a prisoner of State. Have you sold a plan of Kronstadt to M. Goltz?”

My answer may easily be imagined. Hyndford repeated what the Chancellor had told him. I was requested to leave the room, and Funk was sent for. The moment he came in Hyndford said :

“Sir, where is that plan of Kronstadt which Trenck copied?”

Funk, hesitating, replied, “I will go and get it.”

“Is it at your house?” continued Hyndford. “Tell me, on your honour.”

“No, my lord, I have lent it for a few days to M. Goltz, that he might make a copy of it.”

Hyndford immediately saw through the whole affair. He told the Chancellor the history of the plan which belonged to him, and which he had lent to Funk, and requested that a trusty person might be sent with him to make a proper search. Bestuzhev named his first secretary, and to him were added Funk and a Dutch Envoy, Schwart, who happened to come in at that moment. They all went together

to Goltz's house. Funk demanded his plan of Kronstadt ; Goltz gave it to him, and Funk returned it to Lord Hyndford. The Secretary and Hyndford both then desired that he would produce the plan of Kronstadt which he had bought from Trenck for two hundred ducats. At this his confusion became great, and Hyndford firmly insisted that this plan should be forthcoming in order to vindicate the honour of Trenck, whom he held to be an honourable man. On this Goltz said, "I have received my King's commands to prevent the preferment of Trenck in Russia, and I have only fulfilled my duty." Hyndford said more than I care to repeat ; after which the four gentlemen returned to the Chancellor, and I was again called in. Everybody complimented me, told me what had passed, and the Chancellor promised that I should be recompensed, strictly forbidding me, however, to take any revenge on the Prussian Ambassador. I stayed to dinner. The countess affected indifference, and asked me if such-like actions were characteristic of the Prussian nation. Funk and Schwart were at the table. All present congratulated me on my victory, but none knew to whom I was indebted for my deliverance from the hasty and unjust condemnation of the Chancellor, although my protectress was one of the company. I received a present of two thousand

roubles the next day from the Chancellor, with orders to thank the Empress for this mark of her bounty and to accept it as a sign of her especial favour. I paid my thanks some days later. The money I disregarded, and the amiable Empress by her enchanting benevolence made me forget the past. The story became public, and Goltz appeared neither in public nor at Court. Shortly after I had left Russia he fell ill and died of consumption.

This vile man was, no doubt, the cause of all the calamities which fell upon me. I should have become one of the first men in Russia ; the misfortune that befell Bestuzhev and his family some years afterwards might have been averted ; I should never have returned to Vienna, a city so fatal to the name of Trenck ; by the mediation of the Russian Court I should have recovered my great Sclavonian estates ; my days of persecution at Vienna would have passed in peace and plenty ; and I should not have entered the dungeon of Magdeburg.

CHAPTER VII

MY cousin, Baron Francis Trenck, died in the Spielberg on the 4th of October, 1749, and made me his heir on the condition that I should serve only the house of Austria. In March 1750 Count Bernes received the official notification that was sent me informing me of my inheritance. But I would hear nothing of Vienna: the abominable treatment of my cousin terrified me. I well knew the origin of his persecution, the services he had rendered his country, and had been an eye-witness of the injustice by which he had been repaid. Bernes told me that the property left to me was worth more than a million, that the Empress would support me in pursuing my claims, that I had no personal enemies at Vienna, and that a million of certain property in Hungary was worth considerably more than the highest expectations which Russia could hold out to me, where I myself had beheld so many changes of fortune and the effects of family cabals. Russia, he said, was dangerous, Vienna secure, and he promised me his personal assistance. Once I was rich I might reside in whatever

country I pleased, nor could the persecutions of Frederick pursue me so ineffectually anywhere as in Austria. Snares would be laid for me everywhere else, as I had experienced in Russia. "What," said he, "would have been the consequence had not the countess warned you of the impending danger? Like many other honest and innocent men you would have been sent to Siberia." Hyndford spoke to me in the same tone, promised me his eternal protection, and told me that London would assure me a certain asylum should I not find happiness at Vienna.

These arguments at length decided me; but having plenty of money I thought I might as well take in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Holland on my way, and in the meantime Bernes was to prepare a favourable reception for me at Vienna. He desired also that I would give him authority to obtain possession of the estates to which I was heir. My mistress strongly endeavoured to detain me, but at length yielded to the force of reason. I tore myself away and promised on my honour to return as soon as I had arranged my affairs at Vienna. We parted with heavy hearts; she presented me with her portrait and a snuff-box set with diamonds.

From Moscow I travelled to Petersburg, where I found a letter from the countess. She

endeavoured to terrify me from proceeding to Vienna, yet enclosed a bill for four thousand roubles to aid me on my journey if I was absolutely determined to turn my back on fortune. My effects in money and jewels amounted to about thirty-six thousand florins ; I therefore returned the draft and begged that she would reserve her favours and support for times in which they might be needful.

After remaining a few days at Petersburg I journeyed by land to Stockholm, taking with me letters of recommendation from all the foreign Envoys.

At Stockholm I was in need of no recommendation : the Queen, sister of the great Frederick, had known me at Berlin when I had the honour of accompanying her to Stettin as an officer of the Bodyguard. I related my whole history to her without reserve, and she advised me, from political motives, not to remain any longer at Stockholm. So I proceeded to Copenhagen, where I had business to transact for M. Chaise, the Danish Envoy at Moscow, from whom also I had letters of recommendation. Here I had the pleasure of meeting my old friend, Lieutenant Bach, who had aided me in my escape from my imprisonment at Glatz. He was poor and in debt, and I was able to procure him alleviation by relating the noble manner in which he had behaved to me.

I also presented him with five hundred ducats, by the aid of which he pushed his fortune. He wrote to me in the year 1776, full of gratitude for the chance which I had given him, and died a colonel of hussars in the Danish service the same year.

I remained in Copenhagen about a fortnight and then sailed in a Dutch ship from Elsinore to Amsterdam. Scarcely had we put to sea when a storm arose, by which we lost a mast and the bowsprit, had our sails torn to shreds, and were obliged to cast anchor among the rocks of Gothenburg. Here we lay nine days before we could make the open sea, and for a diversion I went every day in the ship's boat, attended by two of my servants, from rock to rock to shoot wild duck and collect shellfish, returning every evening with provisions and sheep's milk which I bought from the poor inhabitants of the islands.

After a time we weighed anchor, but when off the mouth of the Texel another storm arose and drove us to the port of Bohus in Sweden, into which we ran without further damage. A few days later we set sail again with a fair wind and at length reached Amsterdam.

Here I made no long stay, for the day after my arrival an extraordinary adventure happened in which I was involved chiefly by my own rashness. I was watching the harpooners

belonging to the whale fishery practising throwing their harpoons. Most of them were drunk and one of them, Herman Rogaar by name, renowned among these people for his dexterity with his cutlass, came up and made some coarse remarks on my Turkish sabre and offered to fillip me on the nose. I pushed him from me and the fellow threw down his cap, drew his cutlass, challenged me, called me 'monkey-tail,' and asked whether I preferred a straight, circular, or a cross-cut. I had no choice but to fight or run away. The giant grew more and more insolent, so I, turning round to the bystanders, asked them to lend me a cutlass. "No, no," said the challenger, "draw your knife from your side, and, long as it is, I will lay you a dozen ducats you get a gash in the cheek." I drew; he advanced confidently; and at the first stroke of my sabre his sword and the hand that held it both dropped to the ground and the blood spouted in my face.

I now expected that the people would undoubtedly tear me to pieces; but my fear was changed to astonishment at hearing a universal shout applauding the vanquisher of the redoubted Herman Rogaar who, so lately feared for his strength and skill, had now become the object of their ridicule. One of the spectators led me out of the crowd, and the people clamorously followed me to my inn.

This kind of duel, by which I here gained honour, would have brought me into disgrace anywhere else. For a man who knew how to use the sabre properly could disable a hundred Herman Rogaars in a single day. Let this story be a warning to others. He that is quarrelsome shall never want an enemy. My temerity often engaged me in disputes which by timely compliance and calmness might easily have been avoided. But my evil genius always impelled me into perilous ways, and I seldom saw danger till it was too late to turn back.

I left Amsterdam for the Hague where I had been recommended to Lord Holderness, the English Ambassador, by Lord Hyndford, and to the Prince of Orange himself by the Chancellor. It was inevitable, therefore, that I should be received everywhere with all possible distinction. With these recommendations and the knowledge I possessed, had I had the good fortune to have avoided Vienna and gone to India, where my talents would have ensured me wealth, how many years of affliction should I have been spared! My ill fortune, however, had brought me letters from Count Bernes assuring me that heaven was at Vienna and enclosing a summons from the high court requiring me to put in my claim for my inheritance. Bernes further informed me that the Austrian

Court had assured him I should meet with all justice and protection, and advised me to hasten thither without delay.

This advice I took. I proceeded to Vienna—and from that moment my happiness was at an end. I became entangled in lawsuits and the snares of wicked men. Vienna was no place for a man who could not fawn and flatter, yet here I was destined to remain for six and thirty years.

I was now obliged to declare myself as Trenck's heir, but always *cum reservatione juris mei*, not as simply claiming under the will. I was obliged to take upon myself the management of sixty-three lawsuits, and the expenses attending these in Vienna may be imagined. From the whole estate of Trenck I received only 3,600 florins in three years—scarcely sufficient to defray the expenses of New Year's gifts to the solicitors and masters in Chancery. The money I possessed soon vanished. My Prussian relations supported me, and the Countess Bestuzhev sent me the 4,000 roubles I had refused at Petersburg. I had also remittances from my faithful mistress in Prussia, but in addition I was obliged to borrow money at the usurious rate of sixty per cent. Bewildered as I was among lawyers and knaves, my ambition still prompted me to proceed; but my property was exhausted and at length the only

concession I could obtain was that the contested estates should be made a *fidei commissum*, or put under trust, whereby, though they were protected from being the further prey of others, I did not inherit them as mine.

In three years, however, I brought my sixty-three suits to some sort of conclusion ; and when at last the judges of the *Judicium delegatum in causis Trenkiensis* arrived at a verdict, it was such a one as makes me shudder to repeat.

The real estates of Trenck consisted of the great Slavonian manors called the lordships of Pakritz, Prestowatz and Pleternitz, which he had inherited from his father and were the family property, together with Velika and Nustak, which he himself had purchased. The annual income of these was 60,000 florins, and they contained more than two hundred villages and hamlets.

The laws of Hungary require :

1st. That those who purchase estates shall obtain the *consensus regius* (royal consent).

2nd. That the seller shall possess and make over the right of property, together with that of transferring or alienating, and

3rd. That the purchaser shall be a native born or have bought his naturalisation.

In default of all or any of these, on the death of the purchaser, the Fiscus takes possession, repaying the *summa emptitia* or purchase money,

together with what can be shown to have been laid out in improvements, or the *summa inscriptitia*—the sum at which it stands rated in the Fiscal register.

Without formal notice on Trenck's decease, the Hungarian Fiscal President, Count Grassalkowitz, took possession of all his estates in the name of the Fiscus. The prize was great, not so much because of the estates themselves as of the personal property upon them. Trenck had sent loads of merchandise to his estates—linen, ingots of gold and silver from Bavaria, Alsace and Silesia. He had a vast storehouse of arms and saddles, also the great silver service of the Emperor Charles VII, which he had brought from Munich, with the service of plate of the King of Prussia ; and the personal property on these estates was valued at considerably more than the estates themselves.

I am credibly informed that several waggons were laden with these rich effects and sent to Mihalefze. The two officials who were the confidantes of Trenck and the keepers of his treasures each seized a bag of pearls during the general plunder and fled to Turkey, where they became wealthy merchants. His rich studs of horses were taken and the very cows driven off the farms. His armoury consisted of more than three thousand valuable pieces. Trenck affirmed that he had sent linen to the

value of fifty thousand florins in chests from Dunnhausen and Cersdorf in the County of Glatz, to his estates. The pillage was general, and when orders came to send all the property of Trenck and deliver it to his universal heir, nothing remained that was worth having. I myself saw in a certain Hungarian nobleman's house some valuable arms which I knew belonged to me, and I once bought at Esseck some silver plates, on which were the royal arms of Prussia, that had been sold by Counsellor D——n, who had been empowered to take possession of these estates and had thus enriched himself.

The principal reason of my loss of this landed property in Hungary was my having dared to make enquiries concerning the personalty, not one guinea of which was ever brought to account. I proved my right to the family estates left by my uncle beyond all dispute, and also to those purchased by my cousin. The commissioners appointed to enquire into these rights even confirmed them; yet after they had been thus established I received the following order from the Court, in the hand of the Empress herself: "The president, Count Grassalkowitz, deposes upon oath, that the Sclavonian estates do not descend to Trenck *in natura*; he must therefore receive the *summa emptitia et inscriptitia*, together with the money

he can show to have been expended in improvements.”

And herewith ended my pleadings and my hopes. I had sacrificed my property, laboured through sixty-three lawsuits, and lost my birthright without a trial. I could have borne with the loss of the personal property; the booty of a soldier, like the wealth amassed by a Minister, has always seemed to me little better than a public robbery; but the inheritance of my ancestors, my inalienable birthright, of these no man can be deprived without pain. The president, it is true, did not immediately take possession of the estates, but he took good care his friends should have them at such rates that the sale of them did not bring the treasury 150,000 florins; while I, in real and personal property, lost a million and a half; nay, probably a sum equal to this in personal property alone.

The *summa inscriptitia et emptitia* for all these great estates only amounted to 149,000 florins, and this was to be paid by the Chamber; but the president thought proper to deduct 10,000 on pretence that the cattle had been driven off the estate of Pakratz, and a further 36,000 under the shameful pretence that Trenck, in order to pay his pandours, had drained the estates of 3,600 vassals who had never returned; the estates, therefore, must make them good at

the rate of thirty florins per head. This would have amounted to 108,000 florins, but with much difficulty the sum was reduced, as above stated, to 36,000 florins, each vassal being reckoned at ten florins. Thus was I obliged to pay, from the property of my family, for 3,600 men who had died gloriously in a war in defence of the rights of the great Maria Theresa.

All deductions made for legacies, fees and formalities, there remained to me 63,000 florins, with which I purchased the lordship of Zwerbach, and I was obliged to pay 6,000 florins for my naturalisation. Thus when the sums are enumerated which I expended on these lawsuits and received from my friends at Berlin and Petersburg, it will be found that I was a loser, not a gainer, by having been made the universal heir of the enormously wealthy Trenck.

As some sort of recompense for all these misfortunes, the Empress condescended to bestow upon me a cavalry captaincy in the Cardova cuirassiers. Such was the recompense I received for wounds so deep, and such the neglect into which I had fallen at Vienna! Discontent led me to join my regiment in Hungary.

It may well be imagined how a man like me, accustomed as I had been to the first company

of the first Courts, was obliged to pass my time among the Carpathian mountains where neither society nor good books were to be found. Hunting and the conversation of Count Bettoni, together with the friendship of the General, old Field-Marshal Cardova, were my only resources.

CHAPTER VIII

IN March 1754 my mother died in Prussia, and I asked permission from the court in which the inheritance of Trenck was vested as a *fidei commissum* to make a journey to Dantzic in order to settle some family affairs with my brothers and sister. This permission was granted, and thither I went in May, where I once more fell into the hands of the Prussians. This forms the second great epoch of my life. All who read what follows will shudder, will commiserate with the man who, knowing himself innocent, relates the afflictions he encountered and so gloriously overcame.

I left Hungary, where I was in garrison, for Dantzic, where I had desired my brothers and sister to meet me that we might settle our affairs. My principal intent, however, was a journey to Petersburg, there to seek the advice and assistance of my friends. For law and persecution were not yet ended at Vienna, and my captain's pay and small income were scarcely sufficient to defray the charges of attorneys and barristers.

It is here worthy of remark that I was told

by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, Governor of Magdeburg, that he had received orders to prepare my prison at Magdeburg before I set out from Hungary. Nay, more; a letter had been written from Vienna to Berlin warning the King that he must beware of Trenck, and that he would be at Dantzic at the time when the King was to visit his camp in Prussia. It is an incontrovertible truth that I was betrayed and sold by men in Vienna, to whose interest it was that I should be eternally silenced.

On my arrival at Dantzic I was immediately visited by my brothers and sister, and we lived happy in each others' company for a fortnight, and an amicable division was made of my mother's effects. My sister perfectly justified herself concerning the manner in which I was obliged to fly from her house in 1746; our parting was kind, as brother and sister ought to part.

Our only acquaintance in Dantzic was the Austrian President, M. Abrahamson, to whom I had brought letters of recommendation from Vienna, and whose reception of us was polite, even to extravagance. This Abrahamson was Prussian born, and had never seen Vienna, but obtained his office by the recommendation of Count Bestuzhev, without any security for his good conduct or proof of his good morals,

heart or head. He was in close communication with the Russian Resident, Reimer, and was made the instrument of my ruin.

As soon as my brothers and sister had departed, I determined to make a voyage by sea to Russia. Abrahamson contrived by various artifices to detain me a week longer in Dantzic, in order that, in conjunction with Reimer, he might make the necessary preparations.

The King of Prussia had demanded that the magistrates of Dantzic should deliver me up, but this could not be done without offending the Imperial Court, I being a commissioned officer in that service, with proper passports. It was, therefore, probable that negotiations would be necessary, and for this reason Abrahamson was employed to detain me some days longer. I considered him my best friend, and with him I felt perfectly secure; he had, therefore, no difficulty in persuading me to stay.

I had booked my passage on board a Swedish ship bound for Riga, and when the day of departure arrived Abrahamson said he would send one of his servants to the port to find out at what hour the ship sailed. At four in the afternoon he told me he had himself spoken to the captain, who said he would not sail till the next day, adding that he, Abrahamson, would

expect me to breakfast, and would then accompany me to the ship. I felt a little disquieted, which made me desirous of leaving Dantzic at once and sending all my luggage to the ship and sleeping on board. Abrahamson, however, prevented me, dragging me almost forcibly along with him, telling me that he had much company and that I absolutely must dine and sup at his house. Accordingly, I did not return to my inn till eleven at night.

I had just got into bed when I heard a tremendous knocking at my chamber door, which was not locked, and two of the city magistrates, with twenty grenadiers, entered the room and surrounded my bed so suddenly that I had no time to take up arms and defend myself. My three servants had been secured, and I was told that the most worthy magistracy of Dantzic had been ordered to deliver me up as a delinquent to His Majesty the King of Prussia.

What were my feelings at seeing myself thus betrayed ! They conducted me silently to the city prison, where I remained twenty-four hours. About noon, Abrahamson came to visit me, affecting to be infinitely concerned and enraged, and affirmed that he had strongly protested to the magistracy against the illegality of this proceeding, as I was actually in the Austrian service ; but that they had answered him that

the Court of Vienna had afforded them a precedent, since in 1742 they had done the same to the two sons of the Burgomaster Rutenberg of Dantzic, and that, therefore, they were justified in making reprisal ; and likewise they durst not refuse the most earnest request, accompanied with threats, of the King of Prussia.

Their plea of retaliation originated as follows. There was a kind of club at Vienna, the members of which were seized for having committed the utmost extravagancies and debaucheries. Two of them were the sons of the Burgomaster Rutenburg, and were sentenced to the pillory. Large sums were offered by their father, though ineffectually, to avoid this public disgrace ; they were punished ; but their punishment was legal, and had no similarity whatever to my case, nor could it in any way give pretence of reprisal.

Abrahamson, who had in reality entered no protest whatever and had acted in concert with Reimer, advised me to put my writings and other valuable effects into his hands, otherwise they would be seized. He knew that I had received letters of exchange for about seven thousand florins from my brothers and sister, and these I gave him ; but I kept my ring, worth about four thousand, and some sixty guineas which I had in my purse. He then embraced me, declared that he would leave no stone unturned to effect my immediate release,

that he would even raise the populace for that purpose, that I could not be given up to the Prussians in less than a week, and so left me, shedding abundance of crocodile tears.

The next night two magistrates, with their posse, came to my prison attended by Reimer, a Prussian officer and non-commissioned officers, and into their hands I was delivered. The pillage instantly began; Reimer tore off my ring, seized my watch, snuff-box and all I had, not so much as sending me a coat or shirt from my effects. After this they put me into a closed coach with three Prussians. The Dantzic guard accompanied the carriage to the city gate, which was opened to let me pass, after which the Dantzic dragoons escorted me as far as Lauenburg, in Pomerania. Thirty Prussian hussars commanded by a lieutenant relieved the dragoons at Lauenburg, and thus was I escorted from garrison to garrison till I arrived at Berlin. I have forgotten the date of this miserable day, but to the best of my memory it must have been at the beginning of June.

It was immediately given out that my seizure was due wholly to my own imprudence, and that I had exposed myself to this arrest by going outside the city gates, where I was taken and carried off. It is noteworthy that the Court of Vienna did not demand any satisfaction for the treachery of the Dantzickers towards

an Austrian officer. After I had regained my liberty I proved this treachery, but Abrahamson they could not punish, for during my imprisonment he had quitted the Austrian for the Prussian service, where he had gradually fallen so low that in 1764, when I was released from my imprisonment, he was himself imprisoned in the House of Correction, and his wife, lately so rich, was obliged to beg her bread.

Arrived at Berlin, I was lodged over the grand guard-house, with two sentries in my room and one at the door. The King was at Potsdam, and here I remained three days; on the third some staff officers made their appearance, seated themselves at a table, and put the following questions to me :

First, What was my business at Dantzic?

Second, Was I acquainted with M. Goltz, the Prussian Ambassador to Russia?

Third, Who were my confederates in the conspiracy at Dantzic?

When I perceived the drift of these questions I absolutely refused to reply, merely saying I had been imprisoned in the fortress of Glatz without a hearing or court-martial; that I had procured my liberty by my own exertions; that I was now a captain of cavalry in the Imperial service; and that I demanded a legal trial for my first unknown offence, after

which I would answer all questions and prove my innocence. I added that at present, being accused of new crimes without a hearing concerning my former punishment, the procedure was illegal.

They replied that they had no orders about this, so I remained dumb to all further questions.

They wrote for about two hours—God knows what—at the end of which a carriage drove up. I was strictly searched for weapons, thirteen or fourteen ducats which I had concealed were taken from me, and I was conducted under a strong escort through Spandau to Magdeburg. The officer there delivered me to the captain of the guard at the citadel; the Town Major came and took me to a dungeon which had been expressly prepared for me. The door was shut, and I was left alone.

My dungeon was in a casemate, the fore part of which, six feet wide and ten feet long, was divided by a party wall. In the inner wall were two doors, and a third at the entrance of the casemate itself. The window in the seven feet thick wall was so situated that although I had light I could see neither heaven nor earth; I could only see the roof of the magazine. Within and without this window were iron bars, and in the space between was an iron grating, so close and so situated that owing to the rising of the walls it was impossible to

see anyone outside the prison or for anybody to see me. On the outside was a wooden palisade six feet from the wall, by which the sentries were prevented from conveying anything to me. I had a mattress, and a bedstead which was immovably ironed to the floor, so that it was impossible to drag it under the window. Beside the door was a small iron stove and a night-stool, also fixed to the floor. I was not yet put in irons, and my allowance was a pound and a half of ammunition bread per day, and a jug of water.

From my youth I had always had a good appetite, but the bread was so mouldy that I could scarcely eat it. This was the result of Major Reiding's avarice ; he endeavoured to make a profit even out of the scanty food of the prisoners. It is impossible to describe the tortures that, for eleven months, I endured through hunger. I could easily have devoured six pounds of bread a day ; and after having swallowed my small portion I was as hungry as before I began, yet was obliged to wait another twenty-four hours for another portion. How willingly would I have signed a bill of exchange on my property at Vienna for a thousand ducats, only to have satisfied my hunger on dry bread ! God preserve every honest man from sufferings like mine ! Many have fasted three days ; many have suffered

want for a week or more ; but certainly no one beside myself ever endured it in the same degree for eleven months. It may be thought that I should have become accustomed to eating little, but my experience is all to the contrary. My hunger increased every day, and of all the trials my whole life has afforded, this, of eleven months, was the most bitter.

Petitions were of no avail ; the answer was : “ We dare give no more ; it is the King’s command.” When I entreated the Governor, General Borck, at least to allow me to have my fill of bread, he replied : “ You have feasted often enough from the plate taken from the King by Trenck at the battle of Sarau ; you must now eat ammunition bread in your dirty kennel. Your Empress makes no allowance for your maintenance, and you are not worth even the bread you eat or the trouble taken about you.”

My three doors were kept perpetually locked, and I was left to such meditations as my feelings might inspire. Daily, about noon—once in twenty-four hours—my pittance of bread and water was brought. The keys of all the doors were kept by the Governor ; the inner door was not opened, but my bread and water were pushed through an aperture. The prison doors were opened only once a week, on

a Wednesday, when the Governor and Town Major paid their visit, my hole having been cleaned before they came.

Having remained thus for two months, I began to put in hand a project of escape which I had formed.

Where the night-stool and stove stood the floor was brick, and this paving extended to the wall that separated my casemate from the adjoining one, which was uninhabited. My window was guarded by only a single sentry, and I soon found among those who successively mounted guard two kind-hearted fellows who described to me the situation of my prison. Hence I perceived that I might effect my escape could I but penetrate into the adjoining casemate, the door of which was not locked. Provided I had a friend and a boat waiting for me at the Elbe—or if I could swim across that river—the frontier of Saxony was but a mile away. To describe my plan at length would be tedious, yet I must enumerate some of its details, for it was remarkably intricate and necessitated unusual labour.

I worked away the iron strips, eighteen inches long, by which the night-stool was fastened, and broke off the clinchings of the nails, but kept their heads so that I could put them back in their places and all would appear secure to

my weekly visitors. This procured me tools with which to prise up the brick floor, under which I found earth.

I first attempted to work a hole through the wall, seven feet thick, behind and concealed by the night-stool. The first layer was of brick; then I came to large hewn stones. I numbered the bricks both of the flooring and wall carefully, so that I could replace them and make everything appear as it was before. This being done, I proceeded.

On the day before my weekly visitation I replaced everything carefully, including the intervening mortar. The wall had probably been whitewashed a number of times, and in order to fill up all the remaining chinks I flaked off and pounded up some of the white-wash, wetted it, made a brush of my hair, applied this plaster and washed it over to make the whole uniform. Then I stripped myself and sat with my naked body against the place, by which means it soon dried. While I was at work I placed the stones and bricks upon my bedstead, and had my visitors taken the precaution to come at any other time of the week I should inevitably have been discovered. But as no such ill accident befell me, in six months my Herculean labours assumed a prospect of success.

Means had to be found to remove the rubbish

from my prison ; for with a wall so thick it was impossible to replace all of it. Mortar and stone could not be removed, so I took the earth and scattered it about my room, then ground it underfoot the whole day long till I had reduced it to dust. This dust I strewed in the aperture of my window, making use of the loosened night-stool to stand on. I then tied splinters of my bedstead together with the unravelled yarn of an old stocking, and to this affixed my tuft of hair. I worked a large hole under the middle grating which could not be seen when standing on the ground, and through this I pushed the dust with the tool I had prepared. Then, waiting till the wind rose during the night, I brushed it away. By this simple expedient I got rid of at least three hundredweight of earth, and thus made room to continue my labours. I also made little balls of earth, and when the sentry was at the other end of his beat, blew them out of the window through a paper tube.

The difficulties I encountered when I had penetrated about two feet into the hewn stone were enormous. The only tools I had, in addition to the irons which had fastened my bedstead and night-stool, were an old iron ramrod and a sheath knife which a compassionate soldier had given me. The sheath knife did me excellent service, and with it I cut from

my bedstead the splinters which enabled me to pick the mortar from between the stones. Yet the labour of penetrating through this seven-foot wall was incredible. The building was an ancient one, and the mortar was occasionally quite petrified, so that it was necessary to reduce the whole stone to dust. Yet after working unremittingly for six months the end was in sight, for I had reached the facing of brick which alone was between me and the adjoining casemate.

Meanwhile I found an opportunity of talking to some of the sentries, and among them was an old grenadier named Gelfhardt, who I afterwards discovered possessed qualities of the noblest kind. From him I learnt the precise situation of my prison and the circumstances which might best conduce to my escape. With money I learnt that I could buy a boat, cross the Elbe with him and take refuge in Saxony. By Gelfhardt's means I became acquainted with a kind-hearted girl, a Jewess and native of Dessau, Esther Heymannin by name, whose father had been in prison for ten years. This compassionate maiden, whom I had never seen, won over two other grenadiers, who gave her an opportunity of speaking to me every time they mounted guard. By tying my splinters together I made a stick long enough to reach beyond the palisade in front of my window,

and by this means I obtained paper, another knife and a file.

I now wrote to my sister (wife of the before-mentioned son of General Waldow), told her my awful situation and begged her to send three hundred rix-dollars to the Jewess, hoping by this means to escape from my prison. I then wrote another affecting letter to Count Puebla, the Austrian Ambassador at Berlin, in which I enclosed a draft for a thousand florins on my effects at Vienna, and desired him to remit these to the Jewess, having promised her that sum as a reward for her assistance. She was to bring the three hundred rix-dollars my sister should send me, and then concert measures with the grenadiers for my flight. Hope rose high in my breast, for I now had the power either to break into the adjoining casemate or, aided by the grenadiers and the Jewess, to cut the locks from the doors and thus escape from my dungeon. I should add that the letters were open, for I was obliged to roll them round the stick in order to convey them to Esther.

The faithful girl proceeded to Berlin and immediately spoke to Count Puebla. The count received her kindly, read the letter, and told her to go and speak to Weingarten, the secretary at the Embassy, and do precisely what he told her. She was received by Weingarten in the most friendly manner, and by his questions he

drew from her the whole of our intended plan of escape, and also the fact that she had a letter for my sister which she was about to carry to Hammer, near Custrin. He asked to see this letter, read it, told her to proceed on her journey, gave her two ducats towards her expenses, told her to come and see him on her return, and said that during the interval he would endeavour to obtain for her the thousand florins of my draft and would then instruct her further.

Esther cheerfully departed for Hammer, where my sister, then a widow and no longer, as in 1746, in dread of her husband, immediately gave her three hundred rix-dollars and exhorted her to exploit every possible means to obtain my escape. Esther hastened back to Berlin with a letter from my sister and told Weingarten everything that had passed. He read the letter and asked the names of the three grenadiers that were to assist us. He then told her that the thousand florins from Vienna had not yet arrived, but gave her twelve ducats, bade her hasten back to Magdeburg and bring me all the news, and then return to Berlin, where he would pay her the thousand florins. Esther came at once to Magdeburg, and went immediately to the citadel, where, most luckily, she met the wife of one of the grenadiers, who told her that her husband and his comrade had been arrested and put in irons the day

before. Esther suspected at once that we had been betrayed ; she therefore instantly left the town and happily came safe to Dessau.

Weingarten, as was afterwards discovered, was the traitor ; and, although he was much trusted by Count Puebla, he was actually a spy in the pay of Prussia. His sole reason for betraying me was that he might secure the thousand florins for himself ; for the receipt (dated the 24th of May, 1755) attested that the sum was paid by the administrators of my estate to Count Puebla. There could be no doubt that Weingarten appropriated the sum himself, for it is impossible to believe that the Ambassador would commit such an act, although the receipt is in his handwriting. Thus, in order to rob me of a thousand florins, he brought new evils upon me and upon my sister—evils which occasioned her premature death, caused a grenadier to run the gauntlet for three successive days, and brought about the hanging of another.

Esther alone escaped, and she has since given me an account of the whole affair. It was reported at Magdeburg that a Jewess had obtained money from my sister and bribed two grenadiers, and that one of these had trusted, and been betrayed by, his comrade. Indeed, what other story could be told at Magdeburg ? How could it be known that I had been betrayed to the Prussian Ministry by the Imperial Secretary ?

The receipt, however, is in my possession, and the Jewess is still alive. Her poor imprisoned father was punished with more than a hundred strokes of the whip to make him confess whether his daughter had informed him of the plot, or if he knew whither she had fled. He died miserably in fetters a short time after.

By this last act of treachery by Weingarten I was held in chains most horrible for nine successive years. By him was an innocent man brought to the gallows. By him my beloved sister lost home and health. Her goods were plundered, her estates were made a desert, her children were reduced to poverty, and she herself expired in her thirty-third year, the victim of cruelty, of persecution, of her brother's misfortunes, and of the treachery of the Imperial Embassy.

CHAPTER IX

I HAD heard nothing of what had happened for some days ; at length, however, it was the honest Gelfhardt's turn to mount guard ; but the sentries being doubled and two additional grenadiers placed before my door, told me that something untoward had occurred. In spite, however, of all precautions, Gelfhardt found means to inform me of what had happened to his two unfortunate comrades.

Shortly after this the King came to review troops at Magdeburg. He visited the Star Fort and ordered a new cell to be made for me immediately, himself prescribing the kind of irons by which I was to be secured. Gelfhardt heard the officers say that this cell was meant for me and told me about it, but assured me that it could not be ready in less than a month. I therefore determined to complete my breach in the wall as soon as possible and escape without the aid of anyone. The thing was possible, for I had twisted the hair of my mattress into a rope which I meant to tie to a cannon and thus descend the ramparts ; then I could swim across the Elbe, gain the Saxon frontier, and thus escape.

On the 26th of May I determined to break into the next casemate. But when I came to work at the bricks I found them so hard and strongly cemented that I was obliged to defer the labour to the following day. I left off at daybreak, weary and spent, and had anyone entered my dungeon then they must infallibly have discovered the breach.

The 27th of May was a cruel day in the history of my life. My cell in the Star Fort had been finished sooner than Gelfhardt had expected, and at night when I was preparing to fly, I heard a carriage stop before my prison. O God! what was my terror, what were the horrors of this moment of despair! The locks and bolts resounded, the doors flew open, and I had only just time to conceal my knife. The Town Major, the major of the day, and a captain entered by the light of two lanterns. The only words they spoke were, "Dress yourself," which I immediately did. I still wore the uniform of the Cardova regiment. Irons were given me which I was obliged myself to fasten on my wrists and ankles; the Town Major tied a bandage over my eyes, and, taking me by the arms, they conducted me to the carriage. It was necessary to pass through the city in order to reach the Star Fort; all was silent but for the noise made by the escort; but when we entered Magdeburg I heard people running and

crowding together to obtain a sight of me. Their curiosity was raised by the report that I was going to be beheaded. That I was executed on this occasion in the Star Fort, after having been conducted blindfolded through the city, has since been both affirmed and written ; in fact the officers had orders to spread this report in order that the world might remain in ignorance about me.

The carriage at length stopped and I was led into my new cell. The bandage was taken from my eyes. God in heaven ! What were my feelings when I beheld by the light of a few torches the whole floor covered with chains, a brazier's furnace, and two grim men standing with hammers beside an anvil !

One end of an enormous chain was fixed to my ankle, the other to a ring built into the wall. This ring was three feet from the ground and only allowed me to move about two or three feet to the right and left. They next riveted another huge iron ring of a hand's breadth round my naked body, to which hung a chain fixed to an iron bar as thick as a man's arm. This bar was two feet long and at each end of it was a handcuff—the iron collar round my neck was not added till the year 1756.

Not a soul bade me good night ; all retired in dreadful silence ; and I heard the grating of

four doors that were successively locked and bolted upon me !

I foresaw that my misery would not be of short duration. I had heard of the war that had lately broken out between Austria and Prussia. Patiently to await its termination appeared impossible amidst sufferings such as mine, and freedom even then was doubtful. Sad experience had I had of Vienna, and well I knew that those who had despoiled me of my property would anxiously endeavour to prevent my return. Such were my thoughts that night.

Day at length returned, but it brought small alleviation ; for by its dim light I was able to behold the extent of my dungeon.

My cell was about eight feet by ten. Near me once more stood a night-stool, and in a corner was a seat, four bricks broad, on which I could sit and lean against the wall. Opposite the ring to which I was fastened the light was admitted by a semi-circular aperture, one foot high and two feet wide. This aperture reached to the centre of the wall, which was six feet thick, and in the middle of the wall was a close iron grating. From this grating the aperture descended outwards, its outer orifice being again secured by strong iron bars. My dungeon was built in the ditch of the fortification and the aperture by which the light entered was so



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covered by the wall of the rampart that instead of finding immediate entrance it gained admission only by reflection. This, in view of the smallness of the aperture and the impediments of the grating and iron bars, made the obscurity great, yet in time my eyes became so accustomed to this glimmering that I could see a mouse run. In winter, however, when the sun did not shine into the ditch, it was eternal night with me. Between the bars and the grating was a glass window, curiously formed, with a small central casement which could be opened to admit air. The name of TRENCK was built into the wall in red brick, and under my feet was a tombstone with the name of TRENCK also cut upon it and carved with a death's head.

The doors of my dungeon were double, of oak, two inches thick. Beyond these was an open space or front cell in which was a window, and this space was likewise shut in by double doors. The ditch in which this dreadful den was built was enclosed on both sides by palisades twelve feet high, the key of the door of which was entrusted to the officer of the guard, it being the King's intention to prevent all possibility of speech or communication with the sentries. The only movements I could make were those of jumping upwards or swinging my arms in order to warm myself. When I

got more accustomed to these fetters I also found it possible to move from side to side about four feet, but this hurt my shin-bones.

It was only eleven days since the cell had been finished and plastered, and everybody thought it would be impossible for me to live there for more than a fortnight. I actually remained there for six months, continually wet to the skin with icy cold water that dripped upon me from the vaulted roof. In fact I can safely assert that for the first three months I was never dry ; yet my health continued good. I was visited daily at noon after the guard was relieved, and the doors had then to be left open for some minutes, otherwise the dampness in the air put out the visitors' candles.

After some time my fortitude began to revive ; I glowed with the desire of convincing the world that I was capable of suffering what man had never suffered before—perhaps of at last emerging from this load of wretchedness and triumphing over my enemies. So long and ardently did my fancy dwell on this picture that my mind at length acquired a heroism which Socrates himself certainly never possessed. Age had benumbed the sense of pleasure and he drank the poisonous draught with cool indifference ; I was young and ambitious yet now beheld deliverance impossible or at an immense distance.

At noon my den was opened. Sorrow and compassion were depicted upon the faces of my keepers. No one spoke : no one bade me good day. Dreadful indeed was their arrival ; for, unaccustomed to the monstrous bolts and bars, it was a full half-hour before these soul-chilling, hope-murdering impediments could be removed. It was the voice of tyranny that thundered.

My night-stool was taken out, a camp bed, mattress and blankets were brought to me ; a jug of water and an ammunition loaf of six pounds weight were placed beside me. " You can have as much bread as you can eat," said the Town Major ; " so you won't be able to complain of hunger any more." The door was shut and I was again left to my thoughts.

What a strange thing is the emotion which we call happiness ! My joy was extreme when, after eleven months of intolerable hunger, I was again provided with a full feast of coarse ammunition bread. Fond lover never rushed more eagerly to the arms of his expectant bride, or famished tiger sprung more ravenously upon its prey, than I upon that loaf. I ate, rested ; gloated over the precious morsel, ate again ; and absolutely shed tears of pleasure. By evening I had devoured the whole loaf.

Alas, my enjoyment was of short duration ! I soon found that excess is followed by pain

and repentance. Fasting had weakened my digestion. My body swelled, my water jug was emptied; cramp, colic, and inordinate thirst racked me throughout the night. I poured curses on those who sought to refine their torture by inviting me to gluttony after starving me for so long. Could I not have reclined in some way upon my bed I should indeed have been driven this night to desperation; yet even this was but a partial relief, for I was unable to lie at full length. I dragged my fetters, however, together so as to enable me to sit down on the bare mattress. When they opened my dungeon next day they found me in a truly pitiable condition, yet they wondered at my appetite and brought me another loaf. I refused to take it, believing that I should never eat bread again; they, however, left it with me, filled my water jug, shrugged their shoulders and wished me farewell. Apparently they never expected to find me alive again, for they shut all the doors without asking whether I was in need of medical assistance.

Three days passed before I could eat again, and my mind, brave in health, became pusillanimous in a sick body, so that I determined on death. The irons round my body were insupportable and I could not imagine that it was possible that I should ever become

accustomed to them or endure them long enough to expect deliverance. The King had commanded such a prison to be built as should preclude all necessity of a sentry, so that I might not be able to converse with one. I was, therefore, reduced entirely to my own resources, and those resources seemed now at an end. Every argument I could think of convinced me that it was time to put an end to my sufferings. I shall not enter here into theological disputes: let those who blame me imagine themselves first in my position. I had often braved death in prosperity, and at this moment it seemed the greatest blessing vouchsafed to mankind.

Filled with this conviction every minute's delay seemed foolish, yet I wished to be satisfied in my own mind that reason and not rashness had induced the act. I determined, therefore, in order to examine the question coolly, to wait another week and die on the 4th of July. In the meantime I revolved in my mind what possible means there were of escape.

I noticed next day when the four doors were opened that they were only of wood, and I therefore questioned whether I might not cut off the locks with the knife that I had so fortunately concealed. I also determined to make an attempt to free myself of my chains. Happily

I was able to force my right hand through the handcuff, though the blood spurted out from beneath my nails as I did so. My attempts to free my left were for a long time ineffectual, but by rubbing with a brick on a rivet that had been negligently fastened I effected this also.

The chain was fastened to the ring round my body by a hook, one end of which was not inserted in the ring; therefore by setting myself against the wall I had strength enough to bend this hook back so far as to open it and force out the link of the chain. The remaining difficulty was the chain that attached my foot to the wall. The links of this I doubled, twisted and wrenched till at length, Nature having bestowed great strength upon me, I made a desperate effort and sprang up forcibly, when the two links at once flew off.

Fortunate, indeed, did I think myself. I hurried to the door and groped in the dark for the heads of the nails by which the lock was fastened, and soon discovered that the piece of wood which it was necessary to cut was not very large. I immediately set to work with my knife and cut through the oak door to ascertain its thickness. It proved to be only one inch thick and therefore it would be possible to open all the four doors in twenty-four hours.

Again hope revived in my heart ! To prevent detection I hastened to put on my chains ; but O God ! what difficulties I had to surmount ! After much groping about I at length found the link that had flown off, and this I hid. It had been my good fortune hitherto to escape examination, as the possibility of ridding myself of such chains was not suspected. The separated iron links I tied together with my hair-ribbon ; but when I again endeavoured to force my hand into the ring it had swollen so that every effort was fruitless. The whole night was employed upon the rivet of this handcuff, but in vain. Noon was the time of the daily visit, and as my senses told me that this hour approached, necessity and danger again compelled me to attempt to force my hand in. At length, after excruciating pain, I effected it. My visitors came and everything appeared to be in order. I found, however, when they had gone that it would be impossible for me to withdraw my hand again until the swelling had subsided.

I therefore remained quiet till the day fixed, and on the 4th of July, immediately my visitors had closed the doors upon me, I disencumbered myself of my irons, took up my knife, and began my Herculean labour on the door. The first of the double doors that opened inwards was conquered in less than an hour, but the next

was a very different matter. The lock was soon cut round, but it opened outwards, so there was nothing for it but to cut the whole door away above the bar. Incessant and incredible labour made this possible, though it was the more difficult seeing that everything had to be done by touch, as I was in pitch darkness. The sweat flowed from me in streams, my fingers were clotted with my own blood, and my hands were one continuous wound.

Daylight appeared. I clambered over the door that was half cut away and reached the window in the space or cell between the two doors. Here I saw that my dungeon was in the ditch of the first rampart. Before me I beheld the road from the ramparts, the guard-room but fifty paces distant, and the high palisade that would have to be scaled before I could reach the ramparts. Hope grew and I redoubled my efforts.

The first of the next double doors, which also opened inwards, was soon overcome ; but the sun had set before I had finished with it and the fourth had to be cut away as the second had been. My strength began to fail ; both my hands were raw ; I rested awhile, began again, and had made a cut about a foot long when my knife snapped, and the broken blade dropped to the ground !

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God of Omnipotence ! What were my feelings at this moment ! Was there ever, God of mercies, creature of Thine more justified in despair than I ? The moon shone very clear ; I cast a wild and distracted look to heaven, fell on my knees, and in the agony of my soul sought comfort in prayer. But no comfort was there for me ; neither religion nor philosophy could give me that. I cursed not Providence, I feared not annihilation, I dared not the Almighty's vengeance. God was the disposer of my fate, and if He had heaped upon me afflictions which He had not given me strength to support, His justice would not therefore punish me. To Him, the judge of the quick and the dead, I committed my soul : I seized the broken knife, gashed through the veins of my left arm and foot, and sat quietly down and watched the blood flow. Nature overpowered my senses and I fainted.

How long I remained in this state I do not know, but suddenly I heard my own name called and I sat up. It was my faithful grenadier, Gelfhardt, my friend of the citadel ! The good fellow had got upon the ramparts that he might approach and, if possible, comfort me.

“ How are you getting on ? ” asked Gelfhardt.

“ Weltering in my own blood,” I answered.

“ To-morrow you will find me dead.”

“ But why should you die? ” said he. “ It is much easier for you to escape from here than from the citadel. There is no sentry outside your door here and I shall soon find a way of providing you with tools. If you can only break out you can leave the rest to me. Whenever I’m on guard I’ll make an opportunity to come and talk to you. There are only two sentries in the whole of the Star Fort, one at the entrance, the other at the guardroom. Don’t give in. God will help you. Trust me.”

This discourse revived my hopes, and once more I cherished the possibility of escape. I tore up my shirt, bound up my wounds, and awaited the approach of day. When the sun rose it seemed to me that my prison was brighter than it had been before.

Till noon I had time to consider what might be done further ; yet what could be done, or what expected but that I should now be much more cruelly treated and even more insupportably ironed than before, finding, as they must, the doors cut through and my fetters off. After mature consideration I evolved the following plan, which happily succeeded even beyond my hopes.

It is impossible to describe how exhausted I was. My cell swam with blood, and certainly very little was left in my body. Badly wounded,

with swollen and torn hands, I stood there shirtless. The inclination to go to sleep was almost irresistible and I had scarcely strength to keep my legs, yet I had to rouse myself in order that I might execute my plan.

With the bar that kept my hands apart I loosened the bricks of my seat and heaped them up in the middle of my prison. The inner door was wide open and with my chains I so barricaded the upper half of the second one as to prevent anyone climbing over it. When noon came and the first of the doors was unlocked, my visitors were astonished to find the second door open. There I stood, smeared with blood, the picture of horror, with a brick in one hand and a broken knife in the other, shouting as they approached, "Keep off, major, keep off! Tell the Governor I won't have these chains on any longer and that he can shoot me if he likes, for I'll not submit to be chained again. I'll kill any man who comes in here: you see I've got weapons and I'll die rather than give in." The major was terrified: he hesitated a minute or two and then went off to report to the Governor. Meanwhile, I sat down on the bricks to await events. My intention, however, was not so desperate as I had made out: I only wanted to obtain favourable terms for capitulation.

Presently General Borck came in attended by

the Town Major and some officers. He entered the outer cell, but sprang back as soon as he caught sight of me standing there with a brick in my uplifted arm. I repeated what I had told the major and he immediately ordered six grenadiers to force the door. The front cell was barely six feet wide, so that I could only be attacked by two at a time, and when they saw me waiting for them with my pile of bricks they leapt back terrified. A short pause ensued and then the old Town Major with the chaplain advanced to the door to soothe me. We parleyed for some time : whose arguments were the more satisfactory and whose cause the more just I leave to the reader to determine. The Governor then grew angry and ordered a fresh attack. I knocked the first grenadier down and the rest ran back to avoid my missiles.

The Town Major again began a parley. "For God's sake, my dear Trenck," said he, "how have I injured you that you should thus seek to ruin me? I shall have to answer for your having concealed a knife. Be friendly, I beg. You are not without hope and not without friends." I answered him : "That's all very well, but if I give in I know you'll load me with heavier irons than before." He went out to speak to the Governor and returning presently gave me his word of honour that no

further notice should be taken of the affair, and that everything should be replaced exactly as it had been before.

Accordingly I capitulated. They took pity on my condition : my wounds were examined, a surgeon sent to dress them, another shirt was given me, and the bricks, clotted with blood, removed. Meantime, I lay half dead on my mattress. My thirst was appalling ; the surgeon ordered me some wine ; two sentries were stationed in the front cell, and for four days I was left in peace, unironed. Broth was also given me daily and how delicious was this change of diet ! It is impossible to describe how much it revived and strengthened me. For two days I lay in a kind of slumbering trance, forced by unquenchable thirst to drink whenever I awoke. My feet and hands were badly swollen and the pain in my back and limbs was frightful.

On the fifth day the new doors were ready. The inner one was entirely plated with iron, and I was fettered as before : perhaps they found further cruelty unnecessary. The principal chain, however, which fastened me to the wall was thicker than before. Except for this the terms of the capitulation were strictly kept. They even went so far as to express their regret that they could not lighten my afflictions without the King's express

command, hoped that I would have fortitude and patience, and barred up the doors.

I will now describe my dress. My hands being fastened to and kept apart by an iron bar, and my feet chained to the wall, it was impossible for me to put on my shirt and stockings in the usual way. My shirt was, therefore, laced up in front and along the sleeves, and changed once a fortnight. The coarse ammunition stockings were buttoned up the sides ; a pair of blue pantaloons, of sailor's cloth, and a pair of slippers completed my outfit. The shirt was of army linen, and when I contemplated myself in this malefactor's garb, chained to the wall of such a dungeon, and reflected on my former splendour in Berlin and Moscow, I was overwhelmed with a grief that might have hurried the greatest hero or philosopher to madness or despair. Pride, the justness of my cause, the unbounded confidence I had in my own resolution and the labours of an inventive head and iron body alone could have preserved my life. It was these labours, these continual projects of escape, which preserved my health. Who would think that a man fettered as I was could find any means of exercise? Yet by swinging my arms and leaping upwards I frequently worked up a strong perspiration. After thus wearying myself I slept soundly, and often I thought that many a general forced



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to undergo the inclemencies of the weather and the dangers of the battlefield, and many of those who had plunged me in this den of misery, would be happy if, like me, they could sleep with a quiet conscience.

CHAPTER X

THE failure of my attempt to escape, and the recovery of my health from the state into which I had fallen, led me to moralise deeper than I had ever done before ; and in this depth of thought I found unexpected consolation and a firm conviction that I should yet accomplish my deliverance.

Gelfhardt, my friendly grenadier, had infused fresh hope into me, and my mind now began busily to formulate a new plan of escape. A sentry was stationed in front of my door, that I might be more closely under observation. Married men of Prussian regiments were chosen for this purpose. Fortunately for me, these men were more easily persuaded to assist me than those of other provinces. The Pomeranian will listen to reason and is by nature kind, therefore the more easily moved and induced to succour distress.

I grew more accustomed to my irons. I could comb out my long hair and at length could tie it with one hand. I conceived that my beard (for I had long remained unshaven) must give me a somewhat grim appearance, so

I began to pluck it out by the roots. The pain at first was considerable, especially about the lips, but even this I grew used to, and I performed this operation every six weeks or two months, for it required that length of time before my nails could get a hold upon it again. Vermin did not trouble me—they could not have lived in such a damp place as my dungeon—and I kept my muscles in good condition by the exercises which I have described above. My greatest hardship was the dimness of the light. I had read much, and had lived in, and seen much of, the world ; and I revolved the recollection of persons, places, scenes, events, speeches and so on, so often in my mind that they began to form a kind of mental book. Continual habit made this mental exercise so easy that I could compose and store up in my mind poems, satires, fables, speeches, etc. Thus I passed days which would otherwise have been hours of misery.

The greatest of all my incitements to patient endurance was love. I had left behind me in Vienna a lady for whose sake the world was still dear to me ; her would I neither desert nor afflict. To her and to my sister my existence was still necessary. For their sakes, who had lost and suffered so much for mine, would I preserve my life ; for them no difficulty, no suffering, was too great. Yet, alas ! when

long-desired liberty was gained, I found them both in their graves.

About three weeks after my attempt to escape, Gelfhardt first stood sentry over me. It was from the sentries alone that I could hope for means to escape ; for help from without was essential.

My attempt had excited too much surprise and alarm for me to escape strict examination ; for, on the ninth day after I had been shut up in my prison, I had in eighteen hours almost broken through a prison built purposely for me and declared to be absolutely impregnable.

Gelfhardt had scarcely taken his post before we had an opportunity of conversing together ; for when I stood with one foot on my bedstead I could reach the aperture through which light was admitted. Gelfhardt described the situation of my dungeon, and our first plan was to dig under the foundations. He had seen these laid, and assured me that they were only two feet deep.

Money was the first thing necessary. During his guard Gelfhardt managed to bring with him a sheet of paper rolled on a wire, which he passed through my grating, also a small piece of wax candle, some tinder, a match, and a pen. I now had sufficient light to write by, so pricked my finger and wrote with my blood to my faithful friend, Captain Ruckhardt, at Vienna. I

described my situation in a few words, sent him a draft for three thousand florins on my estates, and asked him to lay out a thousand florins in journeying to Gummern, which was only two miles from Magdeburg. Here he was to be without fail on the 15th of August. About noon on that day he was to walk out with a letter in his hand, and a man was to meet him carrying a big roll of tobacco ; to him he was to hand the two thousand florins, then return to Vienna. I passed my letter through the grating to Gelfhardt and told him what to do. He sent his wife with it to Gummern, and it was safely put in the post.

My hopes rose daily, and whenever Gelfhardt mounted guard we continued to discuss our projects. The 15th of August came at last, but it was some days before Gelfhardt was again on guard, and my excitement may be imagined when he exclaimed, " It's all right ! We've succeeded ! " He returned in the evening, and we discussed how he could convey the money to me ; for with my hands chained to an iron bar I was unable to reach the aperture of the window ; besides, it was too small. It was therefore agreed that next time Gelfhardt should be on guard he should get permission to clean out my dungeon, and that he should then convey the money to me in the water-jug. This he luckily was able to do, and imagine

how great was my astonishment when I discovered that instead of one thousand there were two thousand florins in the jug. For I had told him to keep half himself as a reward for his fidelity. He, however, insisted that five florins were enough.

Having money to carry out my design, I now began to put into execution my plan of burrowing under the foundations. The first thing to do was to free myself from my fetters. In order to accomplish this Gelfhardt supplied me with two small files, and by the aid of these, although the labour was great, I at last succeeded in ridding myself of the irons. The staple of the foot-ring was sufficiently wide for me to be able to draw it forward a quarter of an inch. I filed the iron which passed through it on the inside, and the more I filed this away the further I could draw the staple down, till at last the whole inside iron, through which the chains passed, was cut right through. By this means I could slip off the ring while the staple on the outside remained intact, and it was impossible to discover any cut, since only the outside could be examined. By continued efforts I so compressed my hands as to be able to draw them out of the handcuffs. I then filed the hinge, and made a screwdriver out of one of the flooring nails, by means of which I could take out the screws at leisure,

so that when the time came for examination nothing could be detected. The ring round my body was but a small impediment, except for the chain which joined my hand-bar to it. This I removed by filing an aperture in one of the links which, whenever necessary, I closed with bread rubbed over with rusty iron after I had dried it by the heat of my body. I was rather skilful at this, and would have wagered any sum that, short of striking the chain link by link with a hammer, no one who was not in the secret would have discovered the fracture.

The window was never strictly examined. I therefore drew out the few staples by which the iron bars were fixed to the wall, carefully plastering them over. I got some wire from Gelfhardt and tried how well I could imitate the inner grating. Finding I succeeded tolerably, I cut the real grating away altogether and substituted an artificial one of my own manufacture. By this means I obtained a free communication with the outside, together with additional fresh air and all the necessary tools, tinder and candles. In order that the candlelight might not be seen from outside, I hung a blanket over the window. I could then work fearlessly and without danger of being found out.

When everything was ready I set to work. The floor of my dungeon was not made of stone,

but of oak planks three inches thick, three layers of them being laid crosswise and fastened to each other by huge nails a foot long and half an inch thick. Having worked round the head of a nail, I prised it out with my hand-bar, and having sharpened this nail on my tombstone, I found that it made an excellent chisel.

Over the oak planks there were floorboards an inch thick which were inserted two inches under the wall. I cut one of these across, and pulled the free end out from under the wall. I then cut off about two inches, so that when it was replaced it just went under the wall, and I could fill up the cut with bread and strew dust over it, to prevent it being discovered. This done, I was able to work through the nine-inch planks. Under them I came upon a fine white sand on which the fort was built. If I had not had help from outside I could not have proceeded farther; for although I could distribute the chips beneath the boards, it was useless to go on unless I could get rid of the sand. Gelfhardt supplied me with some yards of cloth, out of which I made long narrow bags, stuffed them with earth and sand, and passed them through the iron grating to him when he was on guard. He scattered the contents and passed the bags back to me.

Now that I had room to secrete things under

the floor I obtained some more tools, a bayonet and a pair of pistols, with powder and bullets.

I now discovered that the foundations of my prison were not two feet, but four feet deep. Hard labour and patience were necessary, but few things are impossible where resolution is not lacking.

The hole I made had to be four feet deep, and wide enough to kneel and stoop in ; and the lying down on the floor to work, the continual stooping to throw out the earth, and the narrow space in which all these evolutions had to be performed, made the labour incredible. Moreover, after this daily toil everything had to be replaced and my chains put on again—this alone taking some hours to effect. My greatest help was in the wax candles, but as Gelfhardt mounted guard only once a fortnight, my work was much delayed ; for the sentries were forbidden to speak to me under pain of death, and I was too afraid of being betrayed to seek new assistance.

Being without a stove, I suffered much from cold this winter ; yet my heart was cheerful as the prospect of freedom drew nearer, and every time they came to see me my visitors seemed surprised to find me in such good spirits. Gelfhardt was also able to supply me with food—chiefly sausages and preserved meat—and this considerably increased my strength.

When I was not digging, I amused myself by writing verses and satires ; thus I was able to keep myself constantly employed and was contented even in prison. However, lulled into security by my success, an accident happened to me by which my hopes were nearly frustrated.

Gelfhardt had been assisting me one night, and as soon as he was relieved in the morning I set about replacing the window, which I had to remove on these occasions. As I was doing this the window fell out of my hand and three of the glass panes were broken. Gelfhardt was not due for duty again for several days. For nearly an hour I sat still wondering what I should do, for it was obvious that, since it was impossible for me to reach the window when fettered, if the broken window were seen I should immediately be rigidly examined and the false grating would also be discovered. I therefore determined to speak to the sentry, who was amusing himself by whistling outside my window. "My friend," said I, "have pity, not upon me, but upon your comrades, who will certainly be shot if you refuse to hear what I have to say. I will throw you five florins through the window if you will do me a very small favour." He was silent for some moments, then he said in a low voice : "So you've got some money, have you?" I

immediately counted out five florins and threw them through the window. He asked me what I wanted him to do. I told him my difficulty, and gave him a piece of paper the exact size of the panes. Fortunately he was bold and prudent. Through the negligence of the officer who mounted the guard, the door in the palisade had not been shut that day, and the sentry persuaded one of his comrades to do duty for him for half an hour while he ran into the town and obtained the glass. On receipt of this I instantly threw him out five more florins. Before noon the glass was once more in its place and Gelfhardt's life was safe. Really I was quite an efficient glazier! This incident is rather remarkable, for I never afterwards spoke to the man who did me this signal service. Gelfhardt's alarm may be imagined when, on mounting guard again two days later, I told him about it. He was the more astonished as he was acquainted with the man who had helped me and knew that he had five children, therefore the last man to run any risk, and was, in fact, a man most depended upon by his officers.

I now continued my labour, and found that it would be possible for me to escape by digging under the foundations; but Gelfhardt had been so terrified by the late accident that he made a thousand objections, which increased

in proportion as the end of my task approached, so that at the very time when I wanted to arrange with him the details of my flight he insisted that it was essential we should have additional help. After a good deal of discussion we came to the following agreement, which, however, was destined to render my whole project and eight months' incessant labour abortive.

I wrote once more to Ruckhardt at Vienna, sent him another bill on my estates, and desired him to repair again to Gummern. Here, at an appointed time, he was to wait for six consecutive nights on the Klosterbergen Glacis with two spare horses. During these six days Gelfhardt was to find the means of ensuring that he should be on guard over me. Providence, however, thought proper to ordain otherwise. Gelfhardt sent his wife to Gummern with the letter, and this silly woman told the postmaster that her husband had a lawsuit at Vienna, and begged, therefore, that he would take particular care of the letter, at the same time slipping ten rix-dollars into his hand.

This unexpected liberality immediately roused the suspicions of the Saxon postmaster. He therefore opened the letter and read the contents, and instead of sending it on to Vienna, he took it himself to the Governor of Magdeburg,

who at that time happened to be Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick.

My terror and despair may be imagined when, at three o'clock the same afternoon, the Prince himself entered my prison with his attendants, presented my letter to me, and imperiously demanded who had carried it to Gummern. I told him I did not know. A strict search of my prison was immediately made by smiths, carpenters and masons, but after half an hour's examination they failed to discover either my tunnel or the manner in which I disencumbered myself of my chains. All they could find was that the middle grating of the aperture through which light was admitted had been removed. Next day they came and boarded this up, leaving only a small air-hole about six inches long.

The Prince began to threaten. I persisted that I had never seen the sentry who had done me this service, nor had ever asked his name. Seeing that his attempts were ineffectual he assumed a milder tone.

“Hitherto you have always complained, Baron Trenck,” said he, “that you have been illegally sentenced and have never been allowed to speak in your own defence; I give you my word of honour that you shall have a court-martial and that you shall be released from your fetters if you will tell me who took your letter.”

To this I replied : “ Everybody in my country knows, sir, that I have never deserved the treatment I have been accorded. My conscience is absolutely clear. I am striving to recover my liberty by every means in my power ; but were I capable of betraying a man whose pity has induced him to help me, were I coward enough to purchase happiness at his expense, then indeed should I deserve to wear these chains. So far as I myself am concerned you can do what you like ; but I would remind you that I am not altogether destitute ; I am still a captain in the Imperial service and a descendant of the house of Trenck.”

Prince Ferdinand stood silent for a few moments, then he renewed his threats and left my dungeon. I heard afterwards that as soon as I was out of hearing he remarked to his attendant, “ I confess I pity him, and one cannot but admire his strength of mind.”

I must here remark that when I think of the caution which this great man usually displayed I am filled with amazement at his imprudence in holding this conversation (which lasted a considerable time) with me in the presence of the guard, for my words and bearing passed like wildfire through the whole garrison and gained me many more friends, now that all saw that I would never betray them. The duke said he knew I must have money concealed

somewhere with which to bribe the sentries. He was both right and wrong.

About an hour after the Prince had gone I heard a noise outside and a good deal of talking. Soon afterwards I learnt that one of the grenadiers had hanged himself on the palisade outside my prison ; for the officer of the town guard and the Town Major came back into my dungeon to fetch a lantern they had forgotten, and as the former was going out he whispered to me, " One of your confederates has just hanged himself."

I was terrified, for I knew that it could only be Gelfhardt. Brooding over his fate, I remembered what the Prince had promised me if I told him who my accomplice was. Accordingly I knocked at the door and asked if I could speak to the officer of the guard ; and when he came to the window to ask what I wanted I requested him to inform the Governor that if I could have a light, pen, ink and paper, I would commit the whole matter to writing. These were accordingly sent, and I was given an hour in which to unburden myself ; the door was shut and I was left alone.

I sat down and began to write on my night-stool, but the moment I began to pen the name of Gelfhardt my hand trembled and drew back. I shuddered, rose, went to the aperture of the window, and called out, " For pity's sake tell

me, someone, the name of the man who has just hanged himself, so that I may save others from his fate." It will be recollected that the window was not nailed up till the following day, so I was able to wrap five florins in a piece of paper and throw them out to the sentry, saying, "Take these, my friend, and save your fellows; or, if you like, go and betray me and bring down innocent blood upon your head."

I heard the paper being taken up, and a silence ensued; then in a low voice I heard: "His name is Schutz; he was in Ripps's Company." I had never heard the name before and knew nothing whatever about the man, so my relief may be imagined. I took up my pen and immediately wrote Schutz instead of Gelfhardt. Having finished the letter, I called the lieutenant, who entered and took my light and my writing utensils away, and again barred up the door of my dungeon. The Prince, however, suspected that there was some collusion somewhere, for he made no attempt to keep his promise, and the court-martial at which I was to be heard was not forthcoming. I learnt afterwards the truth of this somewhat mysterious business.

When I had been imprisoned in the citadel a sentry approached my window and, cursing and blaspheming, exclaimed aloud, "Damn the Prussian army! If Trenck only knew what

was in my mind he wouldn't stay in his infernal hole any longer." I entered into conversation with him, and he told me that if I could give him enough money to buy a boat in which to cross the Elbe he would soon make my doors fly open and set me free. I had no money at that time, but I gave him a diamond solitaire worth five hundred florins, which I had managed to conceal. I never heard any more from this man ; indeed, I never spoke to him again. He often stood sentry over me, as I knew by his Westphalian dialect, but whenever I spoke to him he never made any reply. Apparently he must have sold my solitaire and have been rather free with the money it brought ; for after the Prince had left my prison the lieutenant of the guard said to him, " I'm sure you are the man who carried Trenck's letter for him ; if not, where did you get all that money from that you had lately ? You've been seen playing with louis d'or ; how did you get them ? " Schutz was terrified ; his evil conscience told him that I should certainly betray him, seeing that he had cheated me. In an agony of despair, therefore, he walked back to the pelisade and hanged himself before the door of my dungeon.

CHAPTER XI

THE sentries were now doubled, in order that any communication with them might be rendered more difficult. Gelfhardt was again on guard, but it was dangerous for him to say more than a few words. He thanked me for having saved him, wished me good luck, and told me that in a few days the garrison would take the field. This was bad news, for at one blow it destroyed my whole plan. However, I soon recovered my spirits. The hole I had made had not been discovered, and I had five hundred florins, some candles, and a few tools.

About a week later the Seven Years' War broke out, and the regiment took the field. Major Weyner came to see me for the last time and handed me over to the guard of the new militia major, Bruckhausen, who was a surly stupid fellow. I shall have occasion to mention him again.

All the majors and lieutenants of the guard, who had treated me in a friendly and respectful way, now departed, and I became an old prisoner in a new world. My confidence returned, however, when I remembered that both officers

and men are easier to win over in the militia than they are in the regulars, and in fact the truth of this maxim was soon to be confirmed. Four lieutenants were told off, with their squads, to mount guard at the Star Fort in turn, and before a year was past I had won over three of them.

No sooner had the regiment departed than the new Governor, General Borck, came to see me. The King had informed him that he would have to answer for my safety with his head, and had given him plenary powers to treat me as severely as he pleased. Borck was a stupid man with a heart of stone, whose one idea in life was abject obedience to his superiors, and no sooner had he entered upon his new command than he was terrified lest I should get quit of my fetters and escape. Moreover, seeing that the King had condemned me to such cruel imprisonment, Borck made up his mind that I must be the vilest of traitors ; consequently his natural churlishness was intensified towards me a hundredfold. He came into my dungeon more like an executioner attending a condemned man than an officer visiting a brother officer in affliction. Blacksmiths followed him, and a monstrous iron collar, a hand's breadth thick, was clapped round my neck and fastened to my ankle chains with heavy links. My window was then walled up leaving only a small air

hole. He even went so far as to take away my bed, leaving me no straw even to sleep upon, and then departed, cursing the Empress, her army and myself. I took the opportunity of telling him in return just what I thought of him, and he went out nearly mad.

What my situation now was the reader can readily imagine. I still, however, had the means of ridding myself of the irons connected with my anklets, and I also had candles, paper, and a few tools ; and although it was apparently impossible for me to break out of the dungeon undiscovered by both sentries, yet I did not despair of winning over one of the officers by means of money, and thereby, as at Glatz, effect my escape. Had the King's commands been obeyed literally escape would indeed have been out of the question ; for he had issued orders that I was to be entirely cut off from all possibility of communication with the sentries. In order to effect this, the four keys of the four doors were each to be kept by different persons : the Governor was to have one, the Town Major another, the major of the day a third and the lieutenant of the guard the fourth. It was impossible therefore that I could ever have found an opportunity of speaking with any one of them singly. At first these commands were rigidly observed, save that the Governor came to see me only once a week.

However, Magdeburg presently became so full of prisoners that the Town Major was obliged to give his key to the major of the day, and the Governor's visits ceased altogether, the citadel being a mile and a half from the Star Fort.

General Walrabe, who had been a prisoner ever since 1746, was also in the Star Fort, but he had a suite of rooms there and an allowance of three thousand rix-dollars a year. The major of the day and the officers of the guard dined with him daily, and generally stayed till late in the evening. Either through slackness or a lucky concurrence of events these officers were in the custom of handing the keys to the lieutenant on guard, by which means I had an opportunity of speaking to each of them separately when they made their rounds, and at length they used to come and visit me of their own accord. I should add that Borck had chosen three majors and four lieutenants for this service, being officers on whom he could most implicitly rely.

My situation was truly deplorable. The huge iron ring round my neck caused me constant pain and prevented me from moving, and I did not dare to disencumber myself of the chains till I had learnt, by weeks of careful observation, which parts of them my visitors always examined and which parts would be most likely to escape their observation. To

deprive me of my bed had been an even greater cruelty ; for I was now obliged to sit upon the bare ground and lean my head against the damp wall. The chains that hung from the collar were so heavy that I was obliged to support them first with one hand and then with the other ; for if I had thrown them over my shoulder the collar would have strangled me, and if I allowed them to hang down on my chest I suffered fearful headaches. The bar that kept my two hands apart forced one arm out stiffly whenever I leant on my elbow, and this outstretched arm had to bear the weight of the chains ; this so benumbed the muscles that I soon noticed my arms were sensibly wasting away. Sleep was almost impossible in such a situation, and at length body and mind sank under the burden of this suffering, and I fell ill of a fever.

Borck made not the slightest attempt to alleviate my sufferings. In fact his one and only object was to expedite my death and thereby rid himself of his responsibility. Yet hope never completely deserted me. I still thought it was possible that I might be released when peace was declared. But I doubt if mortal man ever willingly sustained what I did ; for it must not be forgotten that I had two pistols in my possession and they offered a ready means of escape from suffering.

I was ill for about two months and was at last reduced to such a state that I had scarcely strength to lift the water jug to my mouth. Is it to be wondered at? For two months I had been sitting on the damp earth of a murky dungeon, my body loaded with chains, my food water and ammunition bread; never a drop of broth nor physic, without consoling friend, and abandoned by all but hope. Sickness itself is enough to humble the proudest mind. The burning fever, the frightful headaches, the swollen neck inflamed with the iron collar, drove me demented. The criminal who is broken on the wheel must die at last: my sufferings continued for two dreadful months.

At last there came a day, a day of horror, when my sufferings were greater than I could bear. I sat racked with fever, attempting to quench my raging thirst with cold water, when the jug dropped from my feeble hands and broke. I knew that for twenty-four hours I must go without water, and I was nearly mad with thirst. I thought only now of my pistols, but by God's mercy my strength was insufficient for me to open the hiding-place in which I had concealed them. Next day when the officer of the guard came his round he found me stretched out apparently dead. They poured water in my mouth and I recovered a little, and that was all the alleviation they

vouchsafed me. They brought me a new jug filled with water, and went out muttering the hope that death would soon release me from my sufferings. But they told others of my state, and presently the news spread through the town, whereupon Borck, at the urgent entreaties of the townsfolk and his officers, consented to restore my bed.

O Nature! Marvellous are thy workings! From that very day on which I broke my jug I gathered strength and, to the astonishment of everyone, soon recovered. My illness had at last moved pity in the heart of at least one of my jailers, and after six cruel months hope once more began to dawn.

It happened that one of the majors of the day was in the habit of entrusting his key to a Lieutenant Sonntag, and after a short time I wormed my way into the lieutenant's confidence. He spoke freely, told me all about his life in the garrison, and complained about his debts and his inability to meet the regimental expenses. I made him a present of twenty-five louis d'or and he was so grateful that we at once became fast friends. The three lieutenants who mounted guard were sorry for my unhappy state, and compassion is the first step towards friendship. Whenever a certain one of the majors of the day was on duty (he was not renowned for his punctiliousness) they would come

and sit with me for hours, and after a few weeks the major himself used to come and spend half the day with me. He too was poor, so I gave him a draft for three thousand florins. It was money well spent.

It now became essential for me to obtain more funds ; for I had disposed of what I possessed among these officers, save for one hundred florins. Fortunately, however, it happened that just at this time the eldest son of Captain K——n (who acted as one of the majors of the day) was cashiered ; and when his father came to me in great distress, I told him to send his son to my sister, who was living at that time not far from Berlin. He went, but found that she was extremely ill. She gave him, however, one hundred ducats, and wrote a letter in which she informed me that my misfortunes and the treachery of Weingarten had brought poverty upon her and an illness which had lasted for more than two years. She wrote that she was in daily expectation of death, wished me a happy deliverance from my imprisonment, and committed her children to my charge. Providence willed, however, that she should recover, and she was eventually married again to Colonel Pape, and died in 1758.

K——n returned happily with the money : his creditors were satisfied, and he made it up with his father. I wrote personally to the

Countess Bestuzhev and to the Grand Duke (afterwards Peter III), recommending the boy and at the same time begging them to do all in their power to secure my release. K——n left for Hamburg and Petersburg where, in consequence of my recommendation, he became a captain and, soon after, major. He played his part so well that, by means of his father and a certain Hamburg merchant, I was shortly able to receive two thousand roubles from the countess. Incidentally, by the service which he rendered me, he made his own fortune in Russia.

To old K——n, who was as poor as he was honest, I gave three hundred ducats, whereby he continued my grateful friend till his death. Among the other officers I distributed a like amount, and matters proceeded so well for me that one of the lieutenants soon began to hand the keys back to the major without locking my prison door and spending half the night with me himself. The guard had money to drink, and all my jailers vied with each other in throwing dust in General Borck's eyes. I was well supplied with candles, books and newspapers, and the days passed quite quickly. I read, wrote, and became so busy that I almost forgot I was a prisoner. However, I was unpleasantly reminded of that fact whenever it was the turn of Major Bruckhausen to inspect

my cell, and on these occasions everything had to be hidden carefully. The other major of the day, however, was altogether on my side, for I had promised to marry his daughter and to make a will leaving him a legacy of ten thousand florins.

Lieutenant Sonntag very kindly had false handcuffs made for me which were so wide that I could easily draw my hands out of them. They were made exactly like the old ones, and Bruckhausen was much too stupid to notice any difference. The rest of my fetters I could take off whenever I wanted to. But I took care that whenever I walked about I held them in my hands so that the sentries might be deceived by their clanking. The iron collar was the only one I did not dare to remove ; moreover it was too strongly riveted. However, I filed through the top link of the chain which hung from it so that I could take this off, sealing the gap with bread as I have described before.

Being, therefore, able to disencumber myself of my fetters at will, I could sleep at ease, and since I could also obtain sausages, cold meat and other luxuries, my situation became somewhat more bearable. But all the luxuries in the world are as nothing if one is deprived of liberty, and I am sorry to say that not one of the lieutenants had the courage of Schell. Moreover Saxony was now in the hands of the Prussians,

and flight would therefore have been extremely dangerous. It was hopeless to attempt to persuade men who were determined to take no risks but, if they *had* to go, were determined to go in safety. As a matter of fact, two of them were not unwilling to help me, but one was a fool and the other too scrupulous: he thought that if his part in the escape were discovered it might ruin his brother in Berlin.

The sentries being doubled, it was impossible for me to escape through the hole which I had dug two years before without being detected; still less was it possible for me, in the face of the guard, to climb the twelve-foot palisade. I determined, therefore, to undertake the Herculean task which I am about to describe. Lieutenant Sonntag measured for me the space between the hole I had dug and the entrance of the gallery in the principal rampart, and found it to be thirty-seven feet. Into this gallery I conceived it might be possible for me to penetrate by mining. The difficulty of the undertaking was somewhat favoured by the nature of the ground, which was a fine white sand. I was confident that if once I could reach the gallery my escape was sure. Sonntag had also instructed me how many steps to the right or to the left I should have to take in order to find the door that led to the second rampart; he also undertook to have this door

left open on the day when I was ready to escape. I had candles and mining tools ; I had money and confidence.

This task occupied me for six months. I have already mentioned the difficulty I had in scraping out earth with my hands. The noise of tools would undoubtedly have been heard by the sentries. My progress, therefore, was slow. I had hardly mined beyond my dungeon wall when I discovered that the foundation of the rampart was not more than a foot deep—a foolish mistake to make in building so important a fortress. This lightened my labour considerably, as I could easily remove the foundation stones and was not obliged to mine so deep.

At this point my work proceeded so rapidly that I was able to advance three feet in one night, but before I had gone ten feet farther I came up against considerable difficulties. To begin with, before I could continue with the work, I was obliged to make room for myself to work in, and this could only be done by emptying the sand out of the tunnel upon the floor of my prison—in itself a labour of some hours. The sand had to be thrown out by hand and returned again to the hole when my night's work was finished. This task, which got me no farther, took up a good deal of my time and energy, and care had to be taken

that no speck of sand remained on the floor of the dungeon when daylight appeared. In addition, the flooring stones had to be most carefully replaced and my chains resumed. So severe was the fatigue of one night's work that I was forced to rest the following three days.

To reduce my labour as much as possible I made the tunnel so small that there was only just room for my body to pass, and there was not even room for me to draw my arm back to my head. I had to work stark naked too, otherwise my jailer would have noticed the soiled condition of my shirt ; for the sand was wet and there was water at four feet deep. At length it occurred to me that if I could make sandbags the sand could be carried in and out much more expeditiously. Accordingly I obtained some linen from the officers, but not, however, in quantities sufficient for my purpose : suspicion would have arisen if any considerable quantity of linen had been carried into my dungeon. So I took my sheets and the tick that enclosed my straw mattress and cut them up for sandbags, taking the precaution of lying on my bed as if ill whenever Bruckhausen paid his visit.

Yet in spite of all my hopes and the progress I was making, the magnitude of my task was so great, and the labour became so intolerable,

that I began to despair. Often would I sit looking at the heaps of sand during a momentary rest and wondering whether it would be possible with my strength and whether time would be sufficient for me to put things back as they had been ere my visitors appeared. Often I half made up my mind to leave things as they were and put up with the consequences. Then, remembering the efforts and the progress I had made, hope would revive and exhausted strength would return. Yet it often happened that my jailers entered the dungeon only a few minutes after the last stone was in its place.

Having tunnelled to within six or seven feet of my objective, a new misfortune occurred which at once put an end to all further attempts. I was working under the foundation of the rampart near where the sentry stood. I had as usual disencumbered myself of all my fetters except the iron collar and its chain. Suddenly while I was working the chain got loose and the clanking was heard by one of the sentries who was standing about fifteen feet from my dungeon. He called the officer of the guard and they, putting their ears to the ground, heard me going backwards and forwards with my sandbags. They reported this at once and the major of the day, who was my best friend, came into my dungeon with the Town Major, a blacksmith, and a bricklayer. I

Or

was terrified. The lieutenant made a sign to tell me that all was discovered. They made a careful examination of the cell, but the officers were purposely blind, as well as the blacksmith and the bricklayer, and they found everything in 'perfect' order. However, had they examined my bed they could hardly have failed to notice that the tick and the sheets were gone. The Town Major, rather a stupid fellow, was convinced that the thing was impossible. He said to the sentry who had accompanied them, "Idiot! It was a mole you heard, not Trenck. How could it possibly be he at work underground at such a distance from his dungeon?" They went out and left me.

There was no time for delay now. Had they come at any other time they would probably have found me at work. But fortunately during the ten years that I was at Magdeburg this never happened, for the Governor and the Town Major were dull, stupid men, and the other officers, poor fools, all hoped that I would escape and turned a blind eye to everything that could incriminate me. I could have broken out in a few days, but now that I was ready to escape I decided to wait until the turn of Bruckhausen came to visit me so that his negligence might fall upon his own head. However, his good angel looked after him, for he fell ill at

this time and his duties devolved on K——n. Still I waited ; and at last Bruckhausen recovered and resumed his visits.

No sooner had he left my cell and the doors clanged behind him than I set to work upon what I supposed to be the last effort. I had only three feet farther to dig and it was no longer necessary for me to carry the sand out of the tunnel, for I now had room to throw it behind me. The eagerness with which I set to work, and the exertions which I made, I will leave to the imagination of the reader. Yet my evil star was once more in the ascendant, for Fortune had decreed that the same sentry who had heard me before should be on guard that day. He, of course, was on his mettle and, convinced that he had not been wrong, listened more intently than ever. Again he heard me burrowing. He went off quietly and called the rest of the guard first and then the major. Bruckhausen came and heard me himself. They then went outside the palisade and listened to me working near the door, at which spot I was about to break through into the gallery. After listening for a moment or two they opened the door, quietly entered the gallery with lanterns, and waited to catch the fox at the mouth of his earth.

Presently, through a small breach that I made I saw a light, and, enlarging the breach

carefully, caught sight of the heads of those who were patiently waiting for me to emerge. I was thunderstruck, but after a moment or two I crept quietly back, made my way through the sand I had thrown behind me and sat down in my cell trembling from head to foot, awaiting the fate that I knew was bound to come. I had the presence of mind to hide my pistols, candles, paper and money under the floor. The money I hid in different spots and put some between the panels of the door. I also hid all my files and tools.

Scarcely had I finished this task when I heard the doors opening. The floor was still littered with sand and sandbags ; my handcuffs, however, and the bar which kept my hands apart I had hastily donned, in the hope that they would suppose that I had been working with them on. This indeed they did, to my future advantage.

Bruckhausen surpassed himself, and cross-examined me like a lawyer. The only reply I made was that I could have broken out several days before and was only waiting for him to get well in order that my escape might be laid to his charge. This completely terrified him : he turned quite white, adopted a deferential tone and evidently looked upon me as one of the seven wonders of the universe.

It was too late in the day to have the sand

removed, so the lieutenant and his guard remained in my dungeon. That night at least I did not want company. When morning came the tunnel was first filled up and the masonry was renewed. Happily Borck was ill and could not come ; I shudder to think what would have been done to me if he had. As it was, my fetters were thoroughly overhauled by the blacksmiths and the irons made heavier than ever. The anklets, instead of being fastened as before, were screwed and riveted. They were at work on the flooring until the following day, so that it was impossible for me to get any sleep.

The worst of my misfortunes was that they carried off my bed, giving as the excuse that I had only used it to cut it up for sandbags. Then, before the doors were finally barred, Bruckhausen and another major came and examined me carefully from head to foot, asking me repeatedly where I kept my tools. I answered them :

“ Gentlemen, Beelzebub is my best and most intimate friend ; he brings me everything I want ; we sit up all night playing picquet and, guard me as closely as you please, he will deliver me out of your power presently.”

Some of them laughed, but others were amazed, and I could see that my reply had made no little impression upon them. They

really believed that I was in league with the devil. In order to puzzle them still more I waited until their backs were turned to go out, and then quickly snatched up one of my hidden files. Then, "Come back, gentlemen," I cried, "you have forgotten something. Look!" I continued as they turned round, "Here is a proof of my friendship with Beelzebub, if you require one. Did you hear me ask him for this? You see he brought it to me in a twinkling." They examined the file in amazement, snatched it from my hands, and hurried out of the dungeon.

Just as the door was closing, I took out a knife and ten louis d'or and called them to come back. They were thunderstruck, and I roared with laughter and reprimanded them for being such blundering inefficient jailers.

Soon after this it was rumoured throughout Magdeburg that I was a magician and that no prison could possibly hope to contain one who was in league with the devil.

A certain officer in the garrison, one Major Holtzkammer, soon profited by this report. A simple-minded townsman offered him fifty rix-dollars to be allowed to take a peep at me through the door, as he said he had never seen a wizard. Holtzkammer reported this to me and we agreed to play upon the townsman's credulity. The major procured me a mask

with a tremendous nose, which I donned when the doors were opened to admit the worthy burgess. The terrified townsman was all for retreat, but Holtzkammer said, "Don't be in a hurry. If you wait a few minutes he will assume quite a different aspect." The door was pushed to, I took off my mask, and whitened my face with chalk. This time the burgess was absolutely terrified, but Holtzkammer managed to keep him there while I altered my appearance yet again. I tied a monstrous moustache under my nose, stuck a pot on my head, and when the door opened a third time thundered, "Begone, rascal, or I will pull your neck awry." This time they both ran, and the townsman, eased of his fifty dollars, won easily.

The major had made it a condition with the man that he was never to reveal what he saw, for it was a breach of duty for an officer to admit anybody to my dungeon. But needless to say in a few days Trenck the Necromancer was the theme in every alehouse in Magdeburg. All sorts of amazing embellishments were added, and at last the story came to the Governor's ears. The burgess was sent for to the Star Fort and deposed on oath what he and the major had seen. The upshot was that Holtzkammer was arrested and severely reprimanded.

My last undertaking, which occupied me more than twelve months, had weakened me so that

I was now little better than a skeleton. Notwithstanding my unquenchable spirit, I should have fallen into despondency at this unhappy end to my great labours had I not still cherished the hope of escape—a hope founded on the friends I had made among the officers. I soon felt the effects of the loss of my bed, and again I was attacked by a violent fever which would certainly have put an end to me this time had not the officers, unknown to the Governor, treated me with all possible consideration. Bruckhausen alone continued implacable, and I did not dare to attempt to free myself from my irons until I had made sure, by several weeks of observation, which parts he invariably examined. At length, however, I again cut through the link which held the massive chain to my iron collar, closing up the fissure as before with bread. My hands I could always draw out of my handcuffs—especially now that illness had shrunk half the flesh off my bones. Six months were to elapse before I recovered sufficient strength to make a new attempt to escape.

CHAPTER XII

ABOUT this time General Krusemarck was posted for duty to the Star Fort. I had formerly been on terms of considerable intimacy with him, when he was a cornet in the Life Guards. Now, however, he showed not the slightest trace of friendship or pity, but merely asked me in an authoritative tone whether I had any means of employing my time to prevent ennui. I answered him in a like tone, for misfortune never yet made me forsake my pride. I therefore told him that, whatever my situation might be, I could always find sufficient entertainment in my own mind, and that when I was asleep I imagined that my dreams were at least as peaceful and pleasant as those of my persecutors.

“ Had you curbed your pride,” said he, “ and asked pardon of the King, you might be in a very different position to-day. I confess that I have no sympathy with a man who obstinately persists in his errors, and tries to obtain his freedom by seducing loyal men from their duty.”

This made me furious. “ Sir,” said I, “ you are a general in the service of the King of

Prussia, and I am a captain in the Austrian army. My royal mistress will either deliver me or revenge my death. My conscience is quite clear. You are perfectly aware that I have done nothing to deserve these fetters. Time will vindicate me. Any man of spirit would approve my sentiments."

He swaggered off, muttering threats, and his last words were, "This bird shall soon be taught to sing another tune."

The effects of his great courtesy were soon evident. An order came from the Governor that I was to be prevented from sleeping, and that the sentries were to wake me up every quarter of an hour throughout the night. This dreadful order was immediately carried out.

Of all punishments perhaps this is the worst. Yet Nature adapts herself marvellously; habit at length taught me to answer the sentries in my sleep. For four years this cruelty was continued, and it was not until the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel put an end to it a year before I was released from prison that I was allowed once more to sleep in peace.

Immediately after this order concerning me was given, Borck, the Governor, my implacable enemy, became insane and was removed from his post. I was not surprised. No sane man could possibly have behaved as he did. Lieutenant-General Reichmann, a most humane

man, was appointed in his stead. About the same time the Court fled to Berlin, and the Queen, the Prince of Prussia, the Princess Amelia and the Margrave Henry, chose Magdeburg as their place of residence. Bruckhausen grew more polite, probably divining that I was not yet deserted and that I might one day obtain my freedom. Cruel men are always cowards.

It was not in the new Governor's power to remove my fetters or amend the regulations that had been issued for my treatment; but what he could do he did. He made no objection to the doors of my prison being left open occasionally for an hour or two in order that I might get some fresh air; and after a time they were allowed to remain open all day.

Having now light, I began to carve with a nail on my pewter mug, and presently attained such proficiency that other mugs were supplied me for this purpose. These were sold as rare curiosities. It became quite the fashion for officers of the garrison to possess mugs engraved by me. This matter, however, came to the King's ears, and he at once ordered that every mug which I engraved should be inspected before it left the prison, lest I should take this means of informing the world of my condition. This command, however, was not obeyed, and the officers did a good trade in these mugs,

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selling them for about twelve ducats each. Some of them are now in museums in various parts of Europe. The Queen-Dowager of Prussia possesses one ; another came into the hands of Prince Augustus Lobkowitz, and he, on his return to Vienna, presented it to the Emperor, who placed it in his museum.

The difficulties of this kind of engraving will be realised when it is remembered that I was working for the most part by candlelight on shining pewter, and that the writing was so minute that it could be read only with glasses. As my hands were still separated by the iron bar, I was obliged to hold the mug between my knees while I was at work. My only tool was a sharpened nail.

But enough of these mugs. My greatest enemy at this time was the huge iron collar, which caused me intolerable headaches whenever the chains hanging from it caused it to press on the back of my neck. I was living too sedentary a life, and for the third time I fell ill. A Brunswick sausage given me by a friend caused me violent indigestion. A fever followed, and I was soon as thin as a skeleton. This time, however, friendly officers supplied me with medicine, and I even had hot food now and then.

As soon as I was well again my thoughts turned once more to escape. I had only forty

louis d'or left, and I could not even get at these until I had taken up the flooring. It was essential that I should obtain some more money.

Lieutenant Sonntag now developed consumption, and was discharged from the army. I told him that if he would go to Vienna I would not only pay his expenses, but would give him an order on my banker for four hundred florins to be paid annually till his death or my release. He agreed, so I told him to seek an audience of the Empress, urge her to obtain my release, and to send me four thousand florins.

He reached Vienna, but, alas! no one there wanted to see me return. They had already begun to divide my estate, and had no desire to render me an account. Poor Sonntag was arrested as a spy, imprisoned, and after some weeks he was given one hundred florins and conducted across the frontier. He was unable to obtain an audience of the Empress, and returned on foot to Berlin, dying twelve months later.

However, a friend, whom I will refrain from naming, visited me secretly, having bribed one of the lieutenants, and left with me six hundred ducats. This noble friend later gave the Imperial Envoy to Berlin, Baron Reidt, four thousand florins to obtain my freedom, as I shall relate in more detail presently. Thus, once again I was in possession of funds.

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Accordingly, I now formed another project for escape. It was highly dangerous and extremely risky, but that did not deter me. This was my plan.

The garrison at Magdeburg at this time consisted of only nine hundred militia, and they were a discontented lot. Two of the majors and two lieutenants were in my pay. The guard at the Star Fort numbered only one hundred and fifteen men. Fronting the gate of this fort was the city gate, guarded only by twelve men under a non-commissioned officer, and on either side of this were the casemates containing seven thousand Croat prisoners. Baron K——y, a captain and a prisoner of war, was also on my side, and had consented to hold his men ready at a certain time and place to assist me. Another friend was to hold his company ready, under some pretence or other, with their muskets loaded, and I could therefore count upon having four hundred armed men to execute my project.

The details were briefly these. The officer of the day was to place the two men whom he most suspected and feared as sentries over me. He was then to order them to take away my bed, whereupon I was to spring through the door and shut them in my dungeon. Clothes and arms were to be ready for me ; the guard at the city gate was to have been surprised and

overpowered, and I was then to have run to the casemates and cried out to the Croats: "To arms! Here's Trenck!" At the same instant my friends were to surround their fellows, and we should have been in possession of Magdeburg, the arsenal, and the royal treasury, not to mention sixteen thousand prisoners of war, who, of course, would have been on our side.

I dare not reveal how all our plans were taken; suffice it to say that everything was provided for and against. I will only add that, seeing it was harvest time, the garrison was extremely depleted, since the farmers were in the habit of paying the captains a florin per man per day, the men themselves earning a like amount. The Governor winked at this practice.

One Lieutenant G—— obtained furlough to visit his relations, but, by my orders, went straight to Vienna. I furnished him with a letter to my lawyers enclosing a draft for two thousand ducats, and pointed out that, with this sum in my possession, I should not only obtain my liberty, but the fortress of Magdeburg as well.

The lieutenant arrived in Vienna and was closely interrogated. Fortunately he withheld his real name. My lawyers advised him to have nothing to do with so dangerous an

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undertaking, told him that I was not possessed of two thousand ducats, and gave him instead of it one thousand florins. With this sum he left Vienna and, very prudently, did not return to Magdeburg. For a month had scarcely passed before the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who was at that time the Governor of Magdeburg, entered my prison holding my letter, and demanded to know who had taken the letter, and who were the men who were going to free me and betray Magdeburg.

What had happened, of course, was that I had been betrayed once more by my 'friends' at Vienna. They preferred to act as though I were dead. The last thing that they desired was that I should obtain my freedom, for then they would have been obliged to disgorge part of my estate.

My consternation at seeing the Governor in my dungeon with my letter in his hand may be imagined. I had the presence of mind, however, to deny that I wrote the letter, and to appear greatly astonished at the excellent imitation of my handwriting. The Governor gave me an account of 'Lieutenant Kemnitz's' movements at Vienna, but of course I knew no lieutenant of that name. It was not difficult, however, to guess who he was. I pointed out to the Governor that the idea of a prisoner in my situation capturing the town was too

ludicrous to be taken seriously. He went out apparently satisfied with my defence ; for he was one of those noble souls who gain no satisfaction from the misfortunes of others.

The next day I was haled before a Court of Enquiry and accused of being a traitor to my country. Naturally I denied my handwriting most persistently. There were no witnesses, and I made an impressive speech for the defence, pointing out that I owed no fidelity to the King of Prussia, and that it was he who was directly responsible for my present condition.

I was then marched back to my cell, and I never heard what the result of the enquiry was. But a good many of the officers fell under suspicion and were removed, and thus I lost my best friends. It was not long before I made others, and, indeed, this was no difficult matter, for none but poor men become officers in the militia.

The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel showed me great kindness, and when I visited him in after years he received me with all possible distinction. I revere his memory and honour his name. When I fell ill not long after this he sent his own doctor to me, and meat from his table, nor would he allow me to be awakened by the sentries ; he also had the dreadful collar removed from my neck, and for this, as he told

me afterwards, he was severely reprimanded by the King.

When I had once more gained over the officers of the guard to my side, I made a fresh attempt at mining my way out. Having now no lack of tools, my chains and the flooring were soon cut through. I presently came upon the money, pistols, and other necessities which I had hidden, but until I could rid myself of some two or three hundredweights of sand it was impossible to proceed. To effect this I made two different openings in the floor; out of the mine hole I threw the sand on to the floor of my dungeon; which done, I closed the hole as carefully as possible. I then started work at the second hole, making as much noise as I possibly could, so that it was obvious to anybody in the neighbourhood that I was trying to escape. This plan succeeded, and about midnight the door opened and in came the guard, catching me in the very act—as I intended they should. None of them enquired why I should want to break out of prison by mining under the door where there was a triple guard to pass. However, the sentries stayed with me, and in the morning prisoners were sent to wheel away the sand. The hole was walled up and boarded, and my fetters were renewed. They laughed at my foolishness in attempting to escape, but punished me by

depriving me of my light and bed. Both of these, however, were restored to me within a fortnight. Needless to say, the other hole—that is to say, the one by which I really meant business—they never discovered. The major and lieutenant were too friendly to notice that three times as much sand was removed as the false hole could possibly contain. Better still, they supposed that, this attempt having failed like my others, I should now give up trying to escape. Even Bruckhausen grew negligent.

After a week or two the Governor and Assistant-Governor both visited me, and so far from imitating the brutality of Borck, the Landgrave spoke to me with great pity, promised to use his best endeavours to procure my freedom when peace was concluded, told me that I had more friends than I imagined, and assured me that I had not been forgotten by the Court of Vienna. He promised me every alleviation it was in his power to grant, and I gave him my word of honour that I would never again attempt to escape so long as he remained Governor. He accepted my word, and ordered the iron collar to be taken from my neck. More, he had my window opened and ordered that my door should be left ajar for two hours every day. A stove, which I might light whenever I required it, was put in my dungeon, better linen was given me for

shirts, and I was supplied with writing-paper. The only condition was that the sheets of note-paper were to be numbered before they were given to me, and that I was to be responsible for the return of every one. Ink, however, was forbidden me; I therefore pricked my finger and allowed the blood to trickle into a pot. As soon as it coagulated I threw away the fibrous part, and so obtained a substitute with which I could both write and draw.

I now busied myself once more with engraving mugs and versifying. I had an opportunity to display my abilities in order to excite esteem and awaken pity. My ardour increased when I learned that my mugs were being discussed at Courts, and that the Queen herself had spoken of them with admiration. My writings also produced their designed effect, and it was really these that gained my freedom for me. Not all the power of Frederick could deprive me of my abilities. Well might he say: "Trenck is a dangerous man; so long as I live he shall never see the light again." Yet I have seen it as broadly as himself, and I have seen it without revenging myself otherwise than by proving my innocence and my virtue. Frederick died convinced of my integrity, yet without affording me retribution. Perhaps he remembered my sufferings, and knew that retribution was impossible. May

my history, my example, console the afflicted, strike terror to the guilty, and inspire the suffering with fortitude.

To return to my dungeon. After my last interview with the Landgrave I accepted my destiny with a mind more at ease than that of many a prince. My hope increased; the newspapers with which I was supplied spoke of the approaching peace, and I passed eighteen months calmly, making no further attempt to escape.

The father of the Landgrave died, and Magdeburg now lost its noble Governor. The good Reichmann, however, showed me the highest consideration and compassion. I had books, I had writing materials, and the time stole unperceived away. Imprisonment and chains had become habitual, and I knew that freedom was approaching.

The death of Elizabeth, the deposing of Peter III and the accession of Catherine II brought about peace. Upon receipt of this intelligence I at once set about providing for all possible contingencies. The worthy Captain K—— had become my intermediary with Vienna; I was assured of support, but I was likewise informed that the administrators of my estate would throw every possible impediment in the way of my freedom. I endeavoured to persuade another officer to help me to

escape, but in vain ; no second Schell could be found.

I therefore opened my old hole, and my friends helped me to disembarass myself of the sand. My money melted away, but the officers of the garrison provided me with tools, gunpowder, and an excellent sword. I had been quiet for so long that the visiting guard no longer took the trouble to examine the floor of my dungeon.

I intended to wait until peace was declared, and then, if my release were deferred, to escape by means of my subterranean passage to the ramparts. To make matters more sure, one of the lieutenants had purchased for me a house in the suburbs of the town where I could lie hid. I also arranged for a friend, with two good horses, to wait for a twelvemonth at Gummern, in Saxony, two miles from Magdeburg. On the 1st and 15th of each month he and to take a ride on the Klosterbergen Glacis, was to dash up to my assistance at a given signal.

I therefore removed the floorboards, sawed up the joists underneath, cut them up into chips and burnt them in my stove. By this means I obtained so much additional room that I was able to proceed half way with my mine. Linen was brought to me for making sandbags, and thus I was enabled to carry on my project

almost to the end. At the conclusion of each night's work I was able to put everything back into position in such a way that I had nothing to fear from the closest inspection ; for I had left sufficient joists to support the floorboards, provided nobody stamped on them. This severe labour, however, again enfeebled me considerably, and once more fortune turned against me. The return of the regulars to the garrison deprived me of all my friends at one stroke.

I must here relate a dreadful accident that happened to me, a thing which I cannot even now think about without shuddering, and the terror of it has often haunted me in my dreams. While mining under the foundations of the rampart, just as I was about to wriggle backwards with a sandbag, my foot dislodged a stone in the wall above, which fell down and closed up the passage. Imagine my horror on finding myself thus buried alive. However, I kept my wits, and after thinking hard for a little I began to work the sand away from one side of me so that I might have room to turn round. By good luck there was sufficient space ahead of me for me to throw the sand into as I worked it away, but the air soon became so foul that I began to lose my head and tried to strangle myself with my hands. My head throbbed and I seemed to be breathing sand. Of all dreadful

deaths, surely such a one as this is the most dreadful. After a time I recovered somewhat, and began to work again, but presently the recess ahead of me became full up and there was nowhere else for me to put the sand that I scooped out. However, I made a last desperate effort and I managed to draw my knees up to my chin and at last turned round. I was now facing the stone, and although this was as high as the whole passage, there was an opening at the top and I could breathe fresher air. My next task was to dig away the sand under the stone and allow the obstacle to sink lower, so that I could creep over it. And at last—after how many hours I know not—I once more reached my dungeon.

The morning was far advanced. I sat down so completely exhausted that I did not think I could possibly recover strength in time to conceal my work. After half an hour's rest, however, my fortitude returned and again I went to work. But hardly had I ended before the noise of locks and bolts moving heralded the approach of my visitors. They found me pale as death. I complained of severe headache, and for some days both body and mind were in such a state, owing to the horrible experience I had undergone, that I began to think my lungs had been affected. Yet after a time my health and strength returned. This

night's happening was the greatest horror which I ever experienced, and for months I dreamt of it nightly, and now, although twenty-three years have elapsed, my dreams are sometimes still haunted by it. Ever after this, when working in my mine I took care to hang a knife round my neck, so that if such a thing happened again I could at once put an end to my sufferings. For over the stone which had fallen there were several other stones which hung loosely, and under these stones I was obliged to creep many hundreds of times. No mortal thing could deter me from attempting to obtain my freedom.

When my tunnel was ready, so that I could break out of it whenever I wanted to, I wrote letters to my friends at Vienna and also sent an impassioned memorial to my sovereign. To my militia friends, who left me at the return of the regulars, I paid an affecting farewell. They had behaved with great humanity, and had supplied all my wants.

Soon after this I learnt that General Reidt had been appointed Austrian Ambassador to Berlin. I had lived in the world, and I knew that this general was not averse from a bribe. Accordingly I wrote him a moving letter begging him not to abandon me, and to act with perhaps more ardour on my behalf than his instructions from Vienna might warrant. With this letter I enclosed a draft for six thousand florins, and

one of my relations at Vienna sent him another four thousand florins. I have to thank these ten thousand florins for my release.

To my surprise, I was informed that no mention of my name had been made in the terms of the Peace of Hubertsberg. I determined to wait three months longer and, if my release were still deferred, to escape by my own efforts. The change in the garrison brought officers who were all of the nobility, and consequently much more difficult to gain over than the militiamen. Once more I had only ammunition bread to eat, and no one supplied me with the smallest comfort. My time hung heavy on my hands, and I was in constant fear that my tunnel might be discovered.

A trivial incident very nearly effected this. Two years previously I had tamed a mouse so that it would play with me, and even take food from my mouth. One night I was amusing myself by playing with it, and I suppose I was talking and laughing. The sentry heard me, and called the officer of the guard. They listened, and decided that all was not right in my dungeon. At daybreak the Town Major, a smith, and a mason, entered and made a careful search of the flooring, walls, chains, and my person—happily in vain. They then asked what was the noise they had heard. I told them about the mouse, whistled to it, and

it came and climbed up on to my shoulder. Orders were immediately given that I should be deprived of this pet. I begged them that at least they would spare its life, since it had in no way offended Frederick. The officer on duty gave me his word of honour that he would present it to a lady, who would treat it with the greatest kindness. Accordingly he took it away, but turned it loose in the guardroom. However, it recognised me alone as its friend, and the poor little beast at once tried to find a hiding-place. Finally it took refuge behind my prison door, and when this was opened next day it ran into the dungeon and testified its joy by jumping up at my legs. Incidentally, I may mention that it had been taken away wrapped up in a handkerchief, and that the guardroom was a hundred yards from the dungeon. How it found its way back to me I know not. Unhappily, it was taken away a second time, and this time was presented to the major's lady. She put it in a cage, but it pined, refused food, and in a few days was dead. Yet it's an ill wind that blows nobody any good. I found that my little friend had nibbled away the bread with which I concealed the crevices I had made in cutting the floorboards to such an extent that a careful examination by the visiting guard would inevitably have led to the discovery of the tunnel.

I have already related that I had arranged for horses to be kept ready on the 1st and 15th of each month, and I allowed the 1st of August to pass only because I was unwilling for my escape to injure one of the majors who was on guard that day, and who had treated me more kindly than his fellows had done. I determined to escape, however, on the 15th. This resolution taken, I waited impatiently for the day, when suddenly a remarkable succession of incidents occurred.

An alarm of fire one morning obliged the major of the day to go hastily into the town, and he therefore handed the keys of my dungeon to the lieutenant. The latter, coming to visit me, said : " My dear fellow, how is it that you have never, during the whole of the seven years that you have been looked after by the militia, found a man like Schell ? "

" You may well ask that," said I ; " but such friends are rare indeed. Many would have been willing, and all of them knew that I could make their fortunes ; but none of them had courage enough when it came to the pinch. I have distributed my money broadcast, but have received little help in return."

" Money ! " said he. " How do you obtain money when you are in this dungeon ? "

" From a secret correspondent at Vienna. . . . If I can be of any service to you, pray

command me. I will lend you what I can willingly, without asking you to pay me back." So saying, I took fifty ducats from my hiding-place between the panels of the door and handed them to him. At first he refused them, but at length accepted them reluctantly. He then went on to tell me that his debts were so great that he had determined to desert, and that he had decided to help me to go with him at the same time, if I could only show him how this could be done in safety.

Our conference lasted a couple of hours, and we formed a plan and worked it out in such detail that failure seemed impossible. I told him that I had two horses in waiting, and that we should soon be beyond pursuit. We vowed eternal friendship, I gave him fifty more ducats, and he swore he had never been so rich before. I discovered that his entire debts, for which he contemplated desertion, did not amount to more than two hundred rix-dollars. However, even this paltry sum was more than he could have liquidated out of his pay.

It was arranged that he was to have four keys made, resembling those of my dungeon, and that these were to be exchanged for the real ones on the day arranged for the escape, the exchange being effected in the guardroom while the major was with General Walrabe. The lieutenant was to give the soldiers on guard

leave of absence for a few hours, or, if he was unable to do this, to send them into the town on various pretences. He was then to withdraw the sentries at the gate and send them into my dungeon to take away my bed. While they were encumbered with this I was to spring out and lock them in, after which we were to mount the horses in readiness and gallop to Gummern. He was to have a week in which to arrange the details of all these plans, and at the end of that time he was to go on guard again.

My spirits now rose considerably, for my hopes of escape were threefold. Reidt was working for me in Berlin ; my tunnel to the ramparts was complete ; and I had an ally within the prison. Unhappily, in my excitement at the prospect of immediate release from my dungeon I seemed to have lost my head ; for I made a resolution which every thinking man will immediately condemn as pitiable and absurd. In a word, I was vain enough and mad enough to form the fantastic project of casting myself upon the generosity of Frederick the Great !

Inebriated with the vision which the success of this amazing scheme conjured up, I addressed the major of the day as follows, as soon as he entered my dungeon :

“ I am aware, sir, that Prince Ferdinand is again in Magdeburg.” (My new friend had told me this.) “ Will you kindly invite him to

come and examine my dungeon carefully, then double the sentries round it, and then tell me at what time it will please His Highness to see me taking a stroll on the Klosterbergen Glacis? If I succeed in doing this, I hope he will afford me his protection, and that he will relate my exploit to the King, who will take it as a proof of my innocence."

The major was astonished. Clearly he supposed that I had gone mad. He said it was entirely ridiculous, and that it was utterly impossible for me to do anything of the kind. However, I persisted, so he rode into the town and came back with the sub-governor, Reichmann, the Town Major, and the major of the day. The answer they gave me was that the Prince promised me his protection, the King's favour, and immediate release from my fetters, if I could prove the truth of my claim. I asked them to appoint a time, but they ridiculed the whole thing as impossible, and at last said that it would be sufficient if I would prove the practicability of my claim. Should I refuse to do this, they would immediately take up the whole of the floor of my dungeon and place sentries in the dungeon with me day and night.

Having extracted from them the most solemn promises of good faith, I proceeded to show them what I could do. I immediately disencumbered myself of my chains, raised the

flooring, showed them my weapons and tools, and also two keys that my friend had procured for me of the doors of the subterranean gallery. I then made them enter the tunnel, and requested them to sound with their sword-hilts the place through which I intended to break, so that they might see that it could be done in a few minutes. I then described the path I was to take through the gallery, telling them that two of the doors there had not been shut for six months, and adding that I had horses waiting for me at the Glacis.

They went, examined, returned, and questioned me. I answered them with as much precision as if I had been the engineer who built the Star Fort. They left me with further assurances of friendship, and were away for about an hour, at the end of which time they came back and told me that the Prince was amazed at what he had heard, and that he wished me all success. They then took me, unfettered, to the guard-house. The major came in, and we had a sumptuous supper, and I was assured that everything would happen as I desired, and that Prince Ferdinand had already written to Berlin.

Next day the guard was reinforced. Two soldiers with fixed bayonets came and stood near me in the guardroom where I had slept. The lieutenant of the guard paraded his men

before me and made them load with live ammunition. The drawbridges were raised, and the entire garrison was prepared for immediate action. I noticed workmen going towards my dungeon, and carts passed loaded with quarry-stones. The officers on guard behaved very civilly and kept a good table ; but two sentries and a junior officer never quitted the guard-room. All conversation was very restrained.

This sort of thing went on for five or six days, and at length it was the turn of my friend the lieutenant to mount guard. He appeared to be as friendly as before, but it was difficult to find an opportunity for conversation with him. He managed, however, to express his amazement at my crazy action, told me that the Prince knew nothing whatever of the affair, and that a report had been spread through the garrison that I had been caught in the act of making a new attempt to escape. I saw my error, alas ! too late, and all I could do was to assure my friend that the step I had taken had been occasioned by my reliance on his promise. He lamented the tragic mistake, and assured me that his feelings had in no wise changed. My courage returned, and I vowed vengeance against the traitorous conduct of the sub-governor.

My dungeon was finished in about a week. The Town Major and the major of the day

led me back to it. One of my feet only was chained to the wall, and no other irons were added ; but the links in the chain were twice as thick as formerly. Instead of flooring, the dungeon was paved with huge flagstones, and the whole of my money and 'properties' were now lost to me for ever. The only money left to me was that which I had hid in the panels of the door and the chimney of the stove. Some thirty louis d'or which I had hidden in my clothes were taken from me.

While the smith was riveting my chains I told the sub-governor what I thought of him, and threatened that, though he confined me in a cage of steel, I would break out if only to spite him. He smiled at my threats. Reichmann, however, told me quietly not to lose heart, and that I should probably soon obtain my freedom in a proper way. They were all of them astonished at my fortitude and confidence.

After I had obtained my liberty, I visited Prince Ferdinand at Brunswick, and he told me exactly what had happened. Terrified at the prospect of being reprimanded for their own carelessness, the officers had reported to him that they had caught me in the act of escaping, and that had it not been for their extreme diligence I should certainly have got away. It was some time before he learned

the truth, and immediately he did so he informed the King.

Next time it was the turn of my friend to mount guard I looked for him in vain, for another lieutenant had been appointed in his place. I did not dare to ask where he was, and it was three weeks before I learned that he had left the regiment. Whether he was afraid, and repented of his promise, I know not, nor do I ever wish to know. However, should he ever read these lines, he will know that I have forgiven him. Others would have been more revengeful; that is not my way. Still, when all is said and done, the fact remains that by showing the white feather he completely cut off all my hope of escape.

Black despair now began again to fix its claws in me; I had not the heart to begin my terrible labours anew. My health began to fail. I worked less on my mugs. It was nine months since peace had been declared. I was forgotten. . . . And then, when I had lost all hope, on the 24th of December, my freedom came. Count Schlieben, a lieutenant of the Guards, arrived with orders for my release.

The sub-governor, who for some extraordinary reason supposed that I had less fortitude than I actually possessed, thought it would not do to tell me the happy tidings too suddenly. He knew not my nature, my presence of mind,

my self-control, which the various dangers and trials that I had endured had made habitual. Accordingly, when he entered my dungeon—for the last time!—he tried to look stern, and said :

“ This time, my dear Trenck, I bring good news. Prince Ferdinand has prevailed upon the King to order that your irons shall be taken off.” He signalled the smith to get to work. “ You shall also,” he continued, “ have a better room.”

“ Then,” said I, “ you mean that I am free ? Tell me ! ”

“ Yes,” he said, “ you are free.” He then shook hands with me, after which I solemnly shook hands with all his attendants. He then asked me what clothes I would like to order. I told him, naturally, the uniform of my regiment. He sent for a tailor, who came and measured me. Reichmann told the man that the uniform must be ready by the morning.

“ That’s impossible,” said the tailor. “ It’s Christmas Eve.”

“ Therefore,” replied Reichmann slowly, “ this gentleman must remain in his dungeon because you want to make holiday.”

The tailor promised to have the uniform ready.

The smith having now finished his work, I was taken to the guardroom, where everybody congratulated me, and the Town Major

proceeded to administer the oath customary to all State prisoners :

Firstly : That I would avenge myself on no man.

Secondly : That I would enter neither the Prussian nor the Saxon States.

Thirdly : That I would never relate by word or in writing what had happened to me.

Fourthly : That as long as the King lived I would serve in neither a military nor civil capacity.

Just before this, Count Schlieben had handed me a letter from the Imperial Ambassador at Berlin, General Reidt, to the effect that he was happy in having found an opportunity of persuading the King to liberate me, and that I must cheerfully obey the commands of Count Schlieben, who had orders to accompany me to Prague.

“ That is so,” said Schlieben, when I looked up. “ I am to take you in a closed carriage through Dresden to Prague, and my orders are that I am not to allow you to speak to anybody on the road. General Reidt has given me three hundred ducats to defray all expenses. We shall have to purchase a carriage, but as it is impossible to do everything to-day, the sub-governor has decided that we shall depart to-morrow night.”

I quietly agreed to all this. Count Schlieben remained with me, and the others presently returned to the town. I dined with General Walrabe in his prison, in company with the major of the day and the officers of the guard. Walrabe died here in 1774, having been at Magdeburg for twenty-eight years. His imprisonment, however, was deserved, and he had nothing to complain of.

Free now to walk about the prison, I took a constitutional on the fortifications in order to accustom myself to light and air, then I went back to my dungeon and collected the money which I had hid there—in all, about seventy ducats. I gave a ducat to every man on guard, three to each of the sentries who had been on duty over me, and ten to be distributed among the picket. I sent the officer on guard a present from Prague, and the remainder of my money I gave to the widow of poor Gelfhardt. He, good fellow, was no more, and I found that she had entrusted the secret of the thousand florins to a young soldier who, by reason of his sudden affluence, came under suspicion, was arrested and betrayed her, with the result that she passed two years in the House of Correction. Gelfhardt, being at the war, never received any punishment. Had he left any children I should, of course, have provided for them. I gave thirty ducats, lent me by Schlieben, to the

widow of the man who hung himself in front of my prison door in 1756.

We spent a riotous night. The guard made merry, and I passed most of the time in their company. On Christmas morning all the officers of the garrison came to visit me, for I was not allowed to go into the town. By noon my uniform and boots were ready. I donned them, turned myself about in front of the looking-glass, and found myself quite passable. I am sorry to say that the mental turmoil and all the congratulations I received, as well as the feasting, prevented me from remembering things very clearly.

Evening came at last, and with it Count Schlieben, a carriage and four post-horses. After an affecting farewell with everyone, we departed. Who would have been so foolish as to prophesy that I should ever shed tears at leaving Magdeburg?—yet it is a fact that I did. Incidentally, I may mention that although I lived there for ten years I never saw the town.

I shall not weary the reader with recording the incidents of our journey, but I should like to mention here that the exact duration of my imprisonment at Magdeburg was nine years, five months and some days. Add to this the seventeen months' imprisonment at Glatz, and the tale of my incarceration is eleven years.

CHAPTER XIII

ON the 2nd of January, Count Schlieben and I arrived safely at Prague, and the same day he handed me over to the Governor of that town, who received me with kindness and distinction. We dined with him on the two following days, and met a large number of distinguished people, for all Prague was anxious to see the man who had survived ten years of such appalling sufferings.

After we had been at Prague a few days a courier arrived from Vienna with an order from the Government to conduct me thither under a strong guard. Incidentally, I was obliged to pay this courier forty florins. I was also obliged to purchase a carriage, and had to disburse one thousand florins more to cover my expenses in Prague. Count Schlieben also tapped me for fifty ducats to pay his charges back to Magdeburg. Captain Count Wela demanded my sword from me, and he and two officers of lesser rank entered the carriage with me on the road for Vienna.

My feelings at this indignity are better imagined than described. By every right I

should have re-entered Vienna in triumph, as one who had endured martyrdom for his country's sake and now hastened to receive his reward. Very far from this being the case, however, I was brought back like a criminal, was sent as a prisoner to the barracks, and was kept there in close confinement, with orders that I should be allowed to write to no one and speak to no one without the permission of the Councillors Kempf and Huttner—which good gentlemen, during my imprisonment, had been the administrators of my estate.

I remained in this durance for six weeks, at the end of which period Field-Marshal Count Alton came and interviewed me. I told him why I suspected I was being kept a prisoner like this, and to him I am indebted for frustrating the abominable plot of my enemies, which was to have me imprisoned for life at Glatz as insane. Unhappily, it was impossible to obtain justice against these two men. They had poisoned the mind of the Empress against me, and had told her that I went about uttering the most terrible threats against the King of Prussia. The election of a King of the Romans was then in the air, and the Court was apprehensive lest I, with a rash desire of vengeance, should do something which might offend the Prussian Ambassador. Moreover, General Reidt had been obliged to promise Frederick that I

should never be allowed at large in Vienna, and that they would keep a close watch upon me. The Empress expressed great pity for my supposed mental state, and asked if any medical assistance could be procured for me. To this they answered that I had been bled several times, but that I was still a very dangerous man. They added that I had squandered my money in a crazy way, having spent four thousand florins in six days at Prague, and that it would be wise therefore to appoint guardians over me to prevent such extravagances.

Count Alton fortunately spoke of me to the Countess Paar, Mistress of the Robes to the Empress, and while he was talking the Emperor entered the room and asked whether I never had any lucid intervals. "May it please your Majesty," answered Alton, "he has now been seven weeks in custody at my barracks, and I have never met a more reasonable or more agreeable man in my life. There is something amiss somewhere or he would not be treated as a madman, or represented as being such at Court. I will pledge my honour that he is as sane as I am."

The next day the Emperor sent Count Thurn to speak to me. I told him everything, and he stayed with me for two hours, telling me a good deal that I cannot here repeat. I gained his confidence, and he continued my friend till



THE EMPRESS MARIA THERESA

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death. Next day he procured me an audience of the Emperor.

This audience lasted for more than an hour. I spoke freely. At length the Emperor was so moved that he rose from his seat and went into the next room ; I saw tears in his eyes. Overcome by my emotions, I fell at his feet. He raised me gently, and signified that the audience was at an end.

The world has called the Emperor Francis a weak Prince. To my mind he was a considerably greater man than Frederick the Great. That he was possessed of a noble mind what I have just stated is a proof, and had not death robbed me of his protection I should long since have regained the Hungarian estates which I have now, alas ! lost for ever.

I returned to my barracks with joy in my heart, and the next day the order came for my release. Count Alton took me to the Countess Paar, and through her I obtained a private audience of the Empress. It is impossible to describe the kindness of my sovereign, or how much she pitied the sufferings I had undergone, or with what words she admired my fortitude. She told me that she was well aware of the vile plot that had been contrived against me, and went on to beg me to put aside all thoughts of vengeance. " Make no complaint," said she, " but do as I desire—I will recompense you ;

you deserve reward and peace, and these I am determined you shall enjoy. But you must sign all the accounts of the administrators whom I have appointed."

What could I do? I must either sign everything that was put before me or be sent to a mad-house. I received a summons next day to attend the councillors; thither I went, and I was obliged to sign in their presence a document containing the following conditions:

Firstly: That I acknowledged the will of Trenck to be valid.

Secondly: That I renounced all claim to the Sclavonian estates, relying alone on Her Majesty's favour.

Thirdly: That I solemnly acquitted my accountants and administrators of all charges whatsoever.

Fourthly: That I would not live in Vienna.

Thus was I dealt with! How did my blood boil as I signed! Yet reflection told me that with my talents and abilities I could obtain honourable employment in any country in Europe. I had at that time no children, so I little regretted what I was losing.

Is it to be wondered at that I determined to shake off the dust of Austria from my shoes for ever? My pride would not allow me to

approach the Empress again, and I had no single friend in Vienna. A few days before my intended departure to seek my fortune elsewhere, however, I fell ill, and sickness brought me almost to the grave. The Empress, hearing of my condition, sent one of her own physicians and a chaplain to my assistance—the fees of both of whom I was obliged to pay. My own doctor could have cured me much more cheaply. Such are the rewards of Court favour!

The Empress went even further: she offered me a major's commission—a rank to which I had been entitled at least ten years previously. The letter which brought me this glad news ran: 'Her Imperial Majesty, in consequence of the fidelity and zeal for her service, so conspicuously demonstrated by a long imprisonment, and in view of his extraordinary endowments and exemplary virtues, has been graciously pleased to bestow upon Baron Trenck the rank of major in the Imperial service.' The rank of major! Why, a general's commission would have been scarcely adequate after what I had undergone. I had been a cavalry captain for fifteen years, and now I was made a major. A major's commission could be bought by any boy for a few thousand florins! Thirty thousand florins only of the money of which I had been robbed would

have purchased a colonel's commission. I could then have been a companion of generals. I could have begotten and educated children for the State, and my rank would have placed me beyond the persecutions of my enemies.

I sought an audience, but this was denied me. I attended a levee of Prince Kaunitz ; but not being known to him personally I was beneath his notice. Unhappily, I considered myself his equal as a man, so I quitted his salon. The Swiss porter from whom I received my cloak congratulated me upon having obtained an audience ! I then wrote to the field marshal, who sent me this extraordinary reply :

‘ My dear Trenck,—If you are unable to purchase a commission you will have to go on retired pay. Moreover, you are too old to learn all the modern methods of warfare.’

I was precisely thirty-seven. So I replied briefly :

‘ Your Excellency mistakes my character. I did not come to Vienna to serve as a retired major. The administrators of my estate have taken good care that I should have no money with which to purchase a commission. But if I had millions I would not obtain promotion in the army by that means.’

Next day I wrote to the Empress. I did not

demand my Slavonian estates back. I only petitioned :

Firstly : That those who had carried off cartloads of gold and silver from my estates without rendering any account either to me or to the treasury should be made to refund at least a part.

Secondly : That thirty-six thousand florins, which had been illegally sequestered from my family inheritance and given to a hospital, should be restored to me.

Thirdly : That since I was bound to pay out of my private purse for the lives of men who had died gloriously on the field of battle in defence of the Empress, Count Grassalkowitz should be made to repay me the thirty-six thousand florins which he had deducted from my estates in order to pay for the three thousand six hundred pandours from my estates who had been killed.

Fourthly : That the fifteen thousand florins which had been deducted from my estates in order to pay for certain fortifications on the Bohemian frontier should likewise be restored to me—together with the fifteen thousand florins which had been paid to men serving in Trenck's regiment.

Fifthly : That the twelve thousand florins of which I had been robbed at Dantzic by

the treachery of the Imperial Councillor Abrahamson should be refunded ; and that public satisfaction should be exacted from the magistrates of Dantzic for having delivered me up to the Prussian authorities contrary to International Law.

I would point out that none of these claims was included in the renunciation which I had been compelled to sign a few weeks before. I should add that I also claimed interest at the customary rate of six per cent. on the capital of seventy-six thousand florins which had been detained by the Hungarian authorities.

Not so much as an answer did I receive to this petition and to a hundred similar ones.

Recovering soon after of my sickness, and walking round the ramparts of Vienna, the spring sunshine awaked in me the consciousness of freedom and the desire of living untrammelled by dishonesty and intrigue. I remembered that I was a man and that I was not in chains. I was as free as the lark singing overhead. And that moment I determined to leave Vienna and to seek some corner of the world where virtue is safe from the tongues of slanderers, the intrigues of Courts and the arbitrary will of monarchs.

And now an incident occurred which furthered my project. Marshal Laudohn was going to

Aix-la-Chapelle to take the waters. I had always personally had a great affection for the marshal, whom I had known when he was a captain of pandours in my cousin's regiment. I accompanied him when he went to take his leave of the Countess Paar, and while we were there the Empress entered the room. On hearing about Laudohn's journey she turned to me and said: "I think the baths would do a great deal to re-establish your health too, Baron Trenck." I bowed, and could not but agree with her. Two days later I followed the marshal, and we remained at Aix for about three months.

I had hardly been at Aix a month before my good friend the Countess Paar wrote to tell me that the Empress had made provision for me, and would look favourably upon me as soon as I returned to Vienna. I tried through my agents to discover what 'adequate' meant, but without effect. However, I had everything to hope from the Empress, so I went back to Vienna at once.

The Countess Paar obtained an audience for me in a few days. The Empress received me graciously, and said:

"I am going to prove to you, Trenck, that I always keep my word. I have, in fact, already taken steps to ensure your future success: I have found a rich and excellent wife for you."

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I was flabbergasted, but I managed to reply :
 “ Most gracious Sovereign; I do not want to marry just yet, and if I did I should go back to Aix.”

“ What ! ” said she ; “ are you married, then ? ”

“ Not yet, please your Majesty.”

“ Are you engaged ? ”

“ Y-e-s.”

“ Well, well—never mind that. I will settle that affair. I have made up my mind that you shall marry the rich widow of M——, and she approves my choice. She is a good, kind woman, and has fifty thousand florins a year. She is just the very wife for you.”

I had difficulty in hiding my consternation. This lovely bride was an old canting harridan of sixty-three, covetous as a miser, vitriolic as a fishwife. After a moment or two I answered :

“ I must tell your Majesty the truth : greatly though I appreciate the honour your Majesty would do me, I am not free to consent, even did the lady possess all the riches of the Indies. I have pledged my word to another, and as a man of honour I must not break it.”

The Empress drew herself up, gave me a withering look, and said :

“ Since you take such pains to procure your own unhappiness, I feel it would be useless for

me to interfere further. You must do as you think proper." So saying, she turned her back on me.

With that audience I paid an eternal farewell to any hope of reward from empresses and kings.

As a matter of fact, had I been inclined to make my fortune by marrying an old woman I might have done so long before—in 1750, in fact, when I was offered one in Holland worth three millions. Moreover, on thinking over the Empress's proposal, it was obvious to me that this was her parsimonious way of recompensing me for the loss of my Slavonian estates and all the rest of my property. But even if the suggested lady had been rich beyond the dreams of avarice I would not have married her, for I had left my heart behind me at Aix in the possession of one endowed with intellect, beauty, and constancy.

Marshal Laudohn had met my mistress at Aix, and heartily approved the match. He knew my feelings, and was aware that I would never subdue my ambition to avenge myself on those by whom I had been so cruelly and so wickedly ill-treated. Both he and a friend at Leipzig, Professor Gellert, advised marriage as a method of calming my passions, and told me that in the tranquillity of domestic life I should no longer wish for companionship with the great ones of the earth.

This friendly counsel was seconded by my own feelings. I returned to Aix in December 1765, and married the younger daughter of an ex-burgomaster named De Broe. During his lifetime he had lived on his own estate at Brussels, where my wife was born and educated, and he was descended from an ancient and noble family in the Province of Artois. My wife's mother was a sister of the Vice-Chancellor of Düsseldorf, Baron Roberte. It is not generally known that one of the two burgomasters of Aix must always be elected from a noble family, the other from the townspeople. My children, therefore, could prove nobility of descent on both the father's and the mother's side.

At that time my wife was young, handsome, worthy and virtuous. She travelled with me in most parts of Europe, and bore me eleven children, all of whom she nursed herself. Eight of them are still alive, and all of them have been properly brought up. God grant that I may be enabled ever to provide for her as she deserves: it is indeed my duty to do so. For two and twenty years she has borne her share of all my sufferings, and she deserves her reward.

I should mention that the last time I had been in Vienna, I had made one more effort to obtain an audience of the Emperor Joseph.

This I had at length obtained and I recounted all that had happened to me, at the same time telling him of certain defects which I had noticed in the Government and laws of the country. He listened to me attentively, expressed the wish to do all that he could for the happiness of all his people, and told me to put down my observations in writing. This accordingly I did, stating precisely, and without reserve, all the shortcomings which I had noticed in civil and military affairs. I requested that these observations might be kept secret, for I had named therein a number of people who had it in their power to do me considerable injury. I also included an account of several incidents which had happened to me in other countries, which prudence has restrained me from recording in these pages.

My memorial was graciously received, but did not, so far as I could observe, produce any considerable effect, and I hastened back to Aix.

For a few years I lived at Aix in peace. My house was the rendezvous of all the best people who came to take the waters. I became more and more widely known, and wherever I went I made friends among the most important and best bred people. I also visited my friend, Professor Gellert, at Leipzig, and showed him some of my writings, asking his advice as to which branch of literature I was most likely to

succeed in. He praised my fables and short stories, but advised me not to write so freely about political matters. I wish I had taken his advice.

In December 1766 my wife bore me a son, and I took the opportunity of writing as follows to the youthful monarch at Vienna :

Your Majesty has doubtless been informed of my marriage. My wife has borne me a son, whom I have christened Joseph, after you. The Imperial Chamberlain, the Baron Rippenda, stood sponsor, by proxy, for your Majesty. This was done without first obtaining your Majesty's consent, because I flattered myself that your Majesty would be graciously pleased to honour me in this way, knowing my loyalty and my misfortunes. I hope that my conduct will ensure for me a happy future at your Majesty's hands.

I shall educate this son in the same loyal principles as I myself entertain ; but, most gracious Majesty, he must be provided for after my death. He will have to say to his Sovereign, ' I am the son and rightful heir of both the Trencks, whose lands and possessions have been seized upon by strangers and aliens. I look up to you, gracious Sovereign, as my protecting deity.'

I hope that your Majesty will participate in my joy and graciously welcome this new citizen into the world.

Will your Majesty also kindly inform me whether you would like me to record my opinions in writing for your Majesty's inspection. My enemies at Vienna daily increase in strength, but I rely on your sovereign protection ; and whatever may be my fate I shall most faithfully and eternally remain your loyal servant,

TRENCK.

The Emperor wrote me by his own hand the following letter, which is still in my possession :

DEAR MAJOR TRENCK,—I am very glad you have christened your son Joseph, and that you selected Colonel Rippenda as my proxy. As a proof of my good wishes for your future I have ordered that henceforth you shall receive your pay at Brussels instead of coming to Vienna for it. Yes, by all means send me your writings; I like to be told the truth; but they will please me more if you will send them simple and unadorned, and not in the satirical dress which you formerly adopted.

I am yours,

JOSEPH.

Soon after this I received orders to communicate with His Majesty's private secretary, Baron Roder. What this communication led to must not here be told: suffice it to say that all my attempts to serve my country were frustrated. I saw the defects of administration too clearly, and spoke my thoughts too frankly, ever to obtain favour from monarchs.

My knowledge of the world increased at Aix, where one comes across men of all nations, particularly the English. In the morning I might converse with a peer of the Opposition, in the afternoon with a leading statesman of the Government, in the evening with a commoner of no particular party. In conversations like these one both acquires and imparts knowledge. I also took to exporting Hungarian wine to

England, France, Holland and the Empire. This necessitated several long journeys, and as my acquaintances increased, I had the opportunity of receiving many foreigners in my own house ; so also I was well received wherever I went.

My love of hunting made me particularly friendly with the English, who brought their own horses and dogs with them to hunt wolves and boars, which animals are not to be found at their own country seats in England, Scotland and Ireland. In this way I obtained a thorough knowledge of the nation. The Elector Palatine gave me permission to hunt in his territory at Juliers, and the Count Palatine of the Rhine gave me a like permission. These permissions to hunt where I would occasioned a number of disputes. Quarrels like these, however, are not often settled in courts of law ; usually a gentleman settles such claims with his sword.

One day an incident occurred which made me famous throughout the country as a magician. I had a quarrel with the Palatine President, Baron Blankart, about a hunting district. I therefore wrote to him to say that on a certain day, if he would go to the place in dispute at ten o'clock in the morning with sword and pistol, he would have the pleasure of meeting me there, when I hoped he would give me

satisfaction for the affront which I had received. Thither I went, accompanied by two huntsmen and two friends, but instead of meeting the baron I was astonished to find two hundred armed peasants assembled.

What was I to do? I sent one of my huntsmen over to the enemy, and told them that if they did not retire immediately I should fire upon them. It was August, and the day was clear and fine, but all of a sudden a thick fog arose. My huntsman came back and reported that just as he delivered his message the fog came on, whereupon all the villagers had taken to their heels. Accordingly I advanced without opposition, fired my gun, as did my friends and followers, and marched up to the house of my adversary, where I ordered my hunting horn to be blown in triumph in his courtyard. At this the villagers fired at me, but the range was too far, and the fog prevented them from aiming accurately.

Having obtained this satisfaction, I returned home, where I found that all manner of reports had preceded me. My wife expected that I should be brought home dead and many of my followers wounded. However, none of us had incurred the slightest mischief. But it was soon spread throughout the countryside that I was a magician who had conjured up a fog to make myself invisible.

On another occasion I played rather an amusing trick on my followers. I had been wolf-hunting in the extensive forests of Monjoye, and had invited the villagers to join in the hunt. We had not much sport, so towards evening I and some forty of my men repaired to some neighbouring charcoal burners' huts which we had well furnished with wine and brandy. "My lads," said I, "you must now fire off your guns and load them again, so that if a wolf escapes to-morrow none of you will have the excuse that your gun misfired."

Accordingly they all re-loaded their guns, which they then placed against the wall in a neighbouring room, after which they began to eat, drink and be merry. While they were thus enjoying themselves, I told my huntsman to go into the room, draw the bullets from the peasants' guns, and give them a double charge of powder. I must tell you here that it was the custom of the peasants to make peculiar notches on the bullets with which they loaded their guns, so that in the event of a wolf receiving several shots the sportsman who killed it could be identified.

My huntsmen gave me the bullets, and I put them in my pocket. Next morning we started hunting again, and as we went along, one of my men turned the conversation on to my magical powers, and asserted that I was

bullet proof. "What is that you are saying?" said I. "Some of these peasants," asserted my huntsman, "won't believe that your honour is able to ward off bullets." "Well, then," said I, laughing, "fire away some of you, and try." Of course, they were unwilling to do so, and at last my huntsman took a gun from one of them and fired at me. I pretended to parry the bullet, and encouraged the others to shoot. Accordingly they all started shooting at me and I pretended to turn and twist about and catch the bullets. I should mention that my huntsman had been particularly careful that no man had re-loaded his gun. Some of the peasants received such kicks from their guns owing to the double charge that they fell down, and their belief in my magical powers was confirmed when I walked towards them holding the bullets in my hand. "Let every man choose his own," said I. They were thunderstruck, and many of them slunk home. A few however remained, and we had excellent sport.

The following Sunday the clergy of Aix began to preach against me. The whole country firmly believed that I dealt with black art. Maybe this belief saved my life on more than one occasion; for the country about Aix swarms with highway robbers (in one year one hundred and sixty were broken on the wheel, quartered and burnt), and any man may hire an assassin

for a ducat. But the clergy had other reasons to dislike me. For in 1772 I published a newspaper at Aix in which I endeavoured to unmask hypocrisy. I attacked the sale of indulgences, the avarice of Rome, the laziness, deceit, licentiousness, gluttony, robbery, and blood-sucking of the monasteries at Aix. I wrote in fact as a moralist, and morals do not enrich monks. Therefore did the chief priest and nine of his satellites fulminate against me every Sunday from their pulpits, publicly accusing me of being a free-thinker and a wizard, and one whom every God-fearing man ought to assassinate. One enthusiastic Jesuit, Father Zunder, declared me an outlaw, and went so far as to appoint a day on which my writings were to be burnt before my front door, the house rased to the ground, and its inhabitants massacred. My wife received letters from friends warning her to take her children and fly for her life, so I deemed that it was time to take vigorous action.

I allowed my wife to depart, and on the appointed day I remained in the house with two of my huntsmen. Our armoury consisted of eighty-four rifles. I arranged these on the balcony in front of the house as an indication that I was prepared to defend my property. Presently Father Zunder, with a bundle of my writings in his hands, appeared, attended by

a considerable crowd. The monks had in fact incited the townsfolk to storm my house. None of them, however, cared to stay within shot while I and my two men remained on the balcony ready to open fire. The day and the night passed in suspense.

In the morning a fire broke out in the town. I hurried out with my two huntsmen (secretly well armed) to give what assistance we could. We seized buckets, and I made the crowd obey my instructions. Father Zunder and his students were also there, and by degrees I edged my way nearer and nearer to him, and presently, as if by accident, smote the monastic ear a considerable clout with my leathern bucket. No one thought proper to take any notice. I passed unattended through the crowd: the people admired my courage, smiled, pulled off their hats and wished me good morning. This is ever the way of the populace when they observe that they are not feared. This put an end to the threats of my adversaries for the time being.

Finding, however, that threats had no effect upon me, they proceeded to action. One day when I was hunting near the monastery of Schwartzbruck, three Dominicans ambushed me behind a hedge. However, one of their number, who was a good sportsman and had often joined me in my hunting expeditions,

gave me notice of the intended plot. So far from avoiding the encounter, I purposely went out of my way and approached the ambush, my double-barrelled gun loaded with ball. As I drew near the spot I called out in a terrible voice, "Shoot, rascals! But take care not to kill me, for the devil stands at your elbow." One fired, whereupon they took to their heels. The bullet went through my hat. I fired in return and wounded one seriously. However, he recovered, and not long after ran away with a farm girl.

After this they tried to poison me, and in 1774 while travelling between Spa and Limbourg I was attacked by eight bandits. The weather was rainy so my rifle was in its case, and my sabre becoming entangled in my belt I was unable to draw it, so was obliged to defend myself with a cudgel which I hastily snatched up. I sprang from the carriage and laid about me with a will, striking down my adversaries, while my faithful huntsman acted as a rear-guard. I scattered the bandits, and taking to my carriage drove on. I should mention that towards the end of the combat I was able to draw my sword, and that I killed two of my assailants. I escaped with a bruised arm and shoulder, and my huntsman was struck with a stone.

My writings had attracted so much notice

at this time, and the *Aix Gazette* had become so famous through my pen, that I drew in four thousand subscribers the first year, each of them paying one ducat for the paper. Unhappily, the other newspaper proprietors of Aix became jealous, and therefore combined against me. A lucky stroke, however, made my paper more in demand than ever. I happened to be talking to Prince Charles of Sweden, who was then stopping at Aix, and he said to me: "When my father dies, either my brother will be King or we shall lose our heads." Shortly after this the King died, and I received a letter from Prince Charles in which he said: 'What I told you in my last conversation will soon come to pass.' Upon receiving this letter I wrote a leading article in my paper announcing that a revolution had taken place in Sweden, and that the King had declared himself an absolute monarch. All the other papers ridiculed this article, but the news of the revolution in Sweden immediately confirmed it. This considerably increased the circulation of my paper.

A little later, however, I wrote an account of the attempted assassination of the King of Poland, and this greatly annoyed the Empress. She wrote to the authorities at Aix and asked them to forbid the publication of my newspaper. Accordingly I did not publish it for a year.

From 1774 to 1777 I travelled a good deal in England and France. I made the acquaintance also of Dr. Franklin, the American Ambassador, who proposed to me that I should go to America. Unhappily, domestic ties prevented me from accepting his offer. The Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel, who had been Governor of Magdeburg during my sojourn at that place, also offered me a commission if I would serve in the troops then being despatched to America. I replied to the effect that I would never assist in enslaving men, and that were I at the head of his grenadiers I would desert to the Americans.

My wine business had flourished exceedingly. I had customers in London, Paris, Brussels, Hamburg and the Hague, and had already made forty thousand florins out of it. The prospects in England were most encouraging, but unhappily these prospects were destroyed in a single day.

It happened that I was in London, and here I was defrauded of eighteen hundred guineas by a swindler. It was my brother-in-law's fault—he was a young man, and he had parted with wine to that value without receiving any security for his money.

In England there is no law against such swindlers. They simply tell you to trust nobody, and then you will not be deceived.

When I was swindled and asked the assistance of my English friends, they simply laughed at me as though they were quite content that an Englishman should cheat a German. I regret that I am unable to give a circumstantial account of this affair, but I will relate the main facts.

Finding that my creditor had no intention of paying me, I went to the chief magistrate, Sir John Fielding. I had already met him in Society, and he told me that he was quite aware that I had been swindled, and that his friendship for me would stir him to activity on my behalf. He informed me that he knew the house where the wine was stored, and that he would send some of his men to go and recover it. I little suspected that he had at that very moment two hundred bottles of my best Tokay in his cellar. His pretended friendship was a mere snare ; he was in partnership with the robbers. Accordingly he sent a constable and six men, ordering them to act under my instructions. As it happened I had a violent headache that day, and was not able to go myself, so I sent my brother-in-law, who incidentally spoke English better than I did. The constable took him to the house of the Jew, and said to my brother-in-law : " This is the house, sir, where your wine is." The door of the house was locked and the constable induced my
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brother-in-law to break it open, whereupon the Jew, pretending great fright, came running out and said: "What do you want with me, gentlemen?" "I want my wine," said my brother-in-law. "Take what is your own," replied the Jew, "but don't dare to touch my property. I have bought the wine and it is mine." My brother-in-law led the constable and his men into the cellar, where they found the greater part of my wine. Accordingly he then wrote to Sir John Fielding and told him that he had found the wine and asked for instructions as to how to act. Fielding sent a verbal message to the effect that the wine must be taken by the owner. Accordingly my brother-in-law procured a cart and sent the wine to me. This done, he proceeded with the constable and his men to the house of another Jew where they acted in the same way, and he came back to me in the evening happy to have recovered the wine.

Next day a constable came with a warrant saying that he was to arrest my brother-in-law and carry him before Sir John Fielding. Whereupon he arrested my brother and carried him off. I went at once to Sir John Fielding, and asked him what it all meant. This upright justice answered in magisterial tones that my brother had been accused of felony, and that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. The

Jews had sworn that the wine was a legal purchase, and was their property. If I had not obtained payment from them that was my own affair and I had no remedy. Six of their accomplices swore that the wine had been paid for, and Sir John Fielding said that had he known this he would never have allowed his men to go with me. Another charge against my brother-in-law was that he had broken open doors and forcibly taken away wine that was not his. He was accordingly charged with burglary and robbery. I was required immediately to give bail for my brother-in-law in one thousand guineas.

I went at once to a lawyer, and he told me that I had no redress and advised me to pay up the bail immediately, and that he would then defend me. I went to Lord Mansfield, and received the same answer. I went to Members of Parliament and they told me the same thing. I went to Lord Grosvenor, and he said: "Never mind, send some more of this excellent wine to London, and you will get so much for it that you will soon make up your loss." This was all very well, but I had not enough capital to trade on these conditions.

So I went to my wine merchant who held a stock of my wine worth more than one thousand guineas. They put up the bail for my brother-in-law, and four days later he was released.

Meanwhile, Fielding had sent his men to my house and they had taken away all the wine, giving it back to the Jews. They even went so far as to threaten to prosecute me as a receiver of stolen goods. I fled from London to Paris, where I immediately sold off all my remaining stock at half price. So ended my trading in London.

The English are a perfidious race. In November my brother-in-law returned to London to defend his cause in the court of King's Bench. In the meanwhile the Jews had disappeared, and the lawyer said that he was unable to proceed with the action unless he had one hundred pounds paid him for his expenses. The nett result of all this was that my brother-in-law returned home minus seventy pounds, and the whole of my stock in the hands of my agents in London was impounded to pay the bill. Thus do the English treat the Germans.

But enough of these proud and selfish Britons who would treat us, and all other nations, as though we were negroes were we to fall under their domination. All I could do to revenge myself was to attack these swindlers in my newspaper, but I regret to say that even this increased the animosity of many people against me. Yet how powerful is an innocent life, how great that presence of mind which conscious virtue inspires! I live and flourish despite all

the attempts of wicked monks and despicable sharpers.

However, the fulminations which I indulged in in my newspaper were not without profit. The Bishop of Liège himself, who levies a tax of forty per cent. on the winnings of the gamblers at Spa, which pernicious system I had exposed, offered me a pension of five hundred guineas per annum if I would remain away from that town and not write about it in my newspaper, with a further income of three per cent. on the winnings of the casino if I would associate myself with Colonel N—— and gain recruits for the tables. My answer can well be imagined, yet for this I was threatened with excommunication by the Holy Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XIV

IN May 1780 I went again to Aix (for I had been living latterly at Spa), and in July of that year my mother-in-law died. In the following September I went back with my wife and family to Vienna.

Arrived there, my wife asked the Mistress of the Robes to obtain her an audience. Her request was granted, and she had the good fortune to gain the favour of the Empress. The great Sovereign was kindness itself. She told my wife that she would like to see her constantly at Court. "And," added she, "you must persuade your husband that a life in Austria will be happier for him than living at Aix-la-Chapelle." Next day she sent me a note telling me that she had granted me a pension of four hundred florins, and adding that she had further bounties in store for me. Accordingly my wife petitioned her to grant me an audience. This request also was complied with, and the Empress said to me: "This is the third time that I have expressed a wish to make your fortune for you." She asked to see my children, adding that so excellent a mother must have beautiful children.

She then referred to my writings. "How much good you might do," she said, "if you would only write in the cause of religion."

My prospects now seemed brighter. My wife was well received at Court, and all the best people in the city called upon us. After a time we retired to live at Zwerbach, and were just about to return to Vienna when the great Theresa died, and all my hopes were frustrated. The pension which she had granted me was continued for only nine months; for the new monarch not only suppressed my pension, as burdensome to the State, but refused to have anything whatever to do with me. I wrote to him, but received no answer. I then petitioned for the restitution of my estate, but received in return a brief notice to the effect that 'The request of the petitioner cannot be granted.'

I therefore retired to the small estate which I had purchased at Zwerbach, but here ill fortune still pursued me. Within the space of six years two hailstorms had levelled my crops, seven floods uprooted my plantings; foot-rot spread among my sheep, and in fact every possible calamity befell me. Ponds had to be drained, the manor house had to be repaired, three farms had to be reconditioned, and the whole of the live-stock renewed. All this reduced me to penury, and the whole of my

wife's fortune had been sunk in lawsuits at Aix-la-Chapelle. My tenants could pay me nothing, and therefore I was insolvent. Indeed, I had to advance my peasants money. My sons helped me, and we worked with our own hands; my wife undertook the education of eight children, and even went without a maid. We lived in poverty and wretchedness, and were obliged to earn our daily bread by the sweat of our brow. Terrified by these calamities I determined to earn my living by my pen, and to publish my works in eight volumes. In fourteen months I had accomplished this purpose. My works met with a favourable reception throughout all Germany, and procured me money, esteem and honour.

On the 22nd of August, 1786, news reached us that Frederick the Great had departed this life. His successor immediately sent me a royal passport for Berlin; the confiscation of my estates was annulled, and at the same time I heard that my brother in Prussia, who had just died, had made my children his heirs.

I now prepared to journey to Berlin, but ill fortune again overtook me and threw me on a bed of sickness. As soon as I was well I made a visit to Hungary, where I was received everywhere with honour and distinction.

On the 5th of January I left Vienna for Prague. Here also I was received with acclamation.

Everybody had read my books. Citizens, noblemen and great ladies bestowed their friendship upon me. My visit was a continual round of banquets. Reluctantly I bade adieu to Prague and continued my journey to Berlin. At Peterswald, on the road to Dresden, my carriage overturned. Fortunately no one was seriously injured, though my son received a bruise on the arm, and, erysipelas supervening, I was unable to present him to the King on my arrival.

On presenting myself at the palace, the King received me with remarkable kindness. All eyes were directed towards me. Everyone shook me by the hand and welcomed me. The King himself was delighted at my reception. I was presented to all the Ambassadors, I was received by the Crown Prince, the Queen, the Queen Dowager, and all the royal family. The King's brother, Prince Henry, invited me to his house, and I had a long talk with him. He promised me his protection in the future, asking me to attend his private concerts, and made me stay to supper with him. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick was just as kind. I dined and supped with him frequently. His wife never tired of listening to my account of my adventures ; and indeed I was *persona grata* wherever I went. Whenever I went to Court people cried out, " There's Trenck," while many would strive to shake hands with me with tears in

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their eyes. Surely no prisoner has ever been accorded such a reception. It was the reward of innocence and virtue.

A few days after I had been presented to the King, I received the following letter :

In reply to your letter of the 9th of this month I am happy to inform you that if you will come and see me to-morrow at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, I shall have great pleasure in giving you an audience. Meanwhile, I pray God to keep you in his charge.

FREDERICK WILLIAM.

Berlin, February 12, 1787.

P.S.—After signing the above I find it will be more convenient if you will come to-morrow at 9 o'clock in the morning. Come about that time to the Marble Room.

F. W.

The anxiety with which I read this note may well be imagined. However, I went and found the Prussian monarch alone, and the audience lasted for more than an hour. How condescending, how kind, how great, how noble he was ! He had read the story of my life, and when he was Prince of Prussia he had visited Magdeburg and had heard of my martyrdom and my many attempts to escape. He asked me many questions about my imprisonment, and I told him the truth. He was much touched, and after he left me I remained standing in the Marble Room, my eyes suffused with tears.

The personal qualities of Frederick William

merit description. He is tall and handsome, his mien is majestic, and his accomplishments both of mind and body would procure him the love of all men if he were not a king. He is affable without deceit, friendly and kind in conversation, and dignified when dignity is necessary. His step is firm, his voice sonorous, his tone commanding, his heart capable of the noblest sentiments, and so benevolent that his greatest happiness is in giving happiness to others. He is bountiful but not profuse, he is not tormented by the spirit of conquest, and he wishes harm to no nation ; yet he will not allow other nations to encroach upon his rights nor will he be terrified by menaces from abroad. He is a soldier and a general, and he realises the importance of mixing with military men. He abhors cruelty, and he abhors selfishness. May he find happiness wherever he may go. May his people be ever worthy of such a prince.

On the 11th of March I presented my son to him at another private audience. The King immediately bestowed upon him a commission in the Pasadowsky dragoons. It is practically impossible to obtain a commission in this regiment without having first served as an ensign ; the King's action, therefore, was a most particular favour.

At Berlin I met many old friends of both

sexes ; among others a man who was at Glatz in 1746 when I cut my way through the guard. He had been one of the sentries at my door, and I had thrown him downstairs. Another man came who had helped me to get rid of my bags of sand when I was at Magdeburg. However, it was time for me to leave Berlin and continue my journey towards Königsberg in Prussia, my native country. On the eve of my departure I once again had the opportunity of conversing for more than two hours with Her Royal Highness the Princess Amelia, the sister of Frederick the Great. Possessed of a native greatness of mind and deep penetration, she alone had the honour of gaining the entire confidence and friendship of Frederick. So far as she was able she protected me in my hour of adversity, heaped benefits upon me, and more than any other person in the world contributed to my deliverance. She told me to write at once to my wife and tell her to come to Berlin with my two eldest daughters. She promised me that if I would do so she would look after them, and indeed would remember my wife in her will. Just as I was about to depart she affectionately asked me if I had sufficient money for the expenses of my journey. " Yes, madam," I replied, " for myself I want nothing ; but I pray you remember my children."

The deep feeling with which I pronounced these words moved her strangely. She took me by the hand and said : " My friend, return quickly. I am always happy to see you." I left the room much touched, and almost decided to remain at Berlin. Had I done so my presence would indubitably have been of great advantage to my children. Alas ! my evil star was ever in the ascendant, and I set out for Königsberg. Five days after my departure the Princess Amelia died.

On the 22nd of March, therefore, I left Berlin, and after staying two days at the Court of the Margrave of Brandenburg, where I was received with all possible honour, I resumed my journey to Königsberg. My road lay through Soldin to Schildberg, where I visited a relative, and where I had the unexpected pleasure of meeting Lieutenant-General Kowalsky. This excellent man had been a lieutenant in the garrison at Glatz in 1746 and was a witness of my historic leap from the wall of the rampart.

From Schildberg I proceeded to Landsberg on the Warta. Here I found my brother-in-law, Colonel Pape, Commander of the Gotz dragoons, second husband of my dead sister. With him I passed a very happy day. Everybody congratulated me on my glorious return to my own country, and expressed the most ardent wishes for a happy future. I found

friends at almost every garrison I visited, and had a most loyal reception.

Continuing my journey I arrived at Königsberg on the 4th of April, where my brother met me. We had not seen each other for forty-two years. He had been living a peaceable life on his own estates, and had no children living. I spent a very happy fortnight with him, and afterwards went on with him to his country seat where I stayed six weeks. Here I learnt all about the rest of the family whom I had not seen for so many years. It was not a happy tale. The hatred of Frederick the Great had extended to the whole of my family, for all my brothers and sisters had been punished because of me. But I will forbear to give details.

And so, at long last, my journey is accomplished. I have vindicated my name, my son is in His Majesty's service, and in Prussia at least I am victorious over fate. May my tragic story be a lesson to the afflicted, afford hope to the despairing, fortitude to the weak, and may it soften the hearts of kings. Joyfully do I thus journey to the shores of death. My conscience is void of reproach, posterity shall bless my memory, and the few remaining hours of life shall be dedicated to the love of my fellow men. I wish only for rest, for quietness. I would live peaceably, and would steal

gently away to that last asylum where all men must go. Grant, Almighty God, that the prayer I make this day may be heard and that such may be the conclusion of my eventful life.

THE END

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